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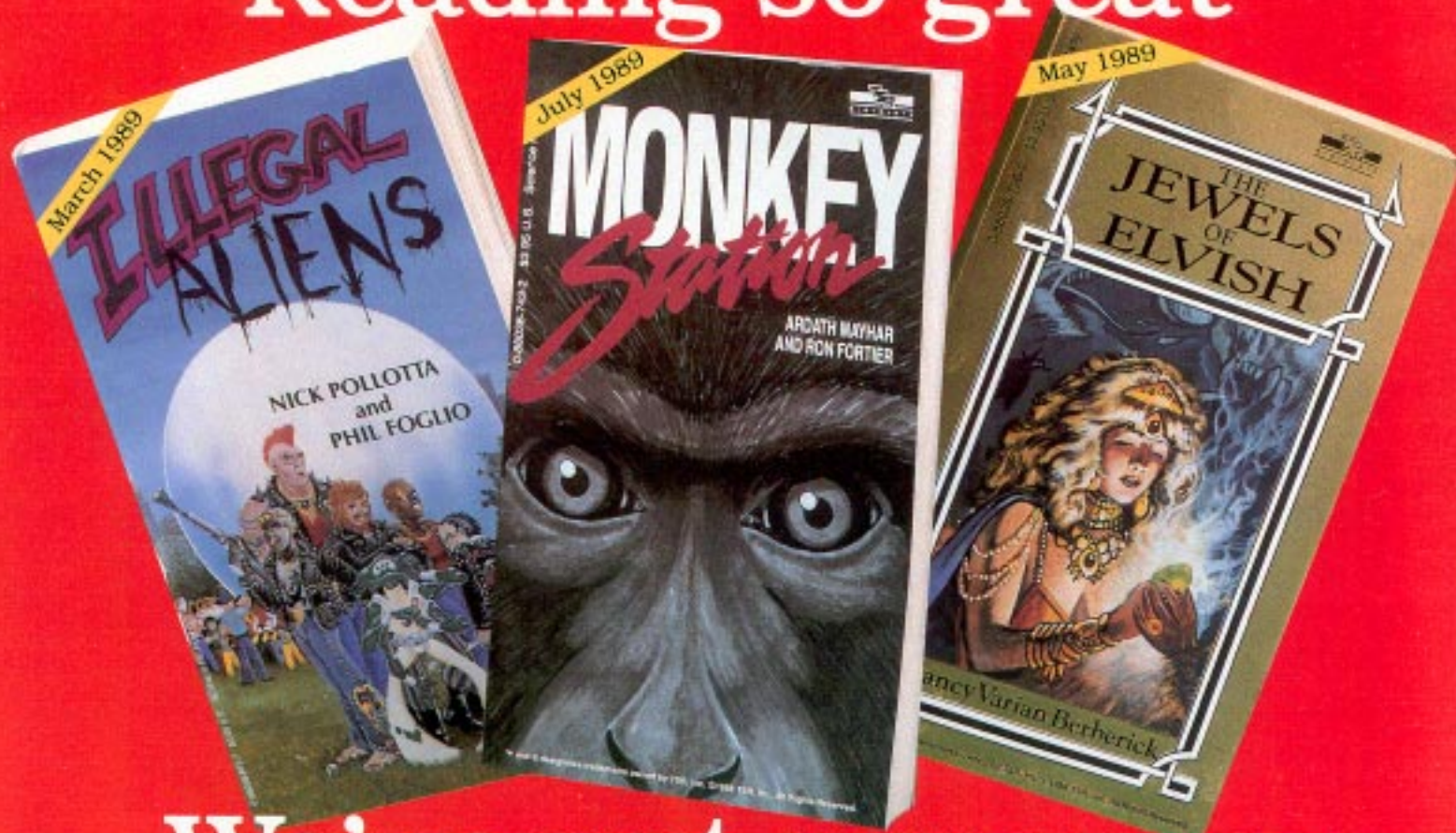
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CONTENTS

Special Attraction

- 1 1** **Everything You've Ever Wanted To Know About Role-Playing**
(Everything that wasn't in the rules, that is.)
- 1 2** **A Field Guide to Game-Convention Ornithology** - Skip Williams
See any Bull-headed Slashers in your gaming group last evening?
- 2 0** **Cheating Made Easy** - Jefferson P. Swycaffer
Creative ways to roll dice, measure movements, and enrage your friends
- 2 4** **Cheating Made Even Easier** - Spike Y. Jones
If the last article didn't stop you, then you're ready for the big time!
- 2 8** **Claydonia Conquers the World!** - Paul C. Easton
Clay-O-Rama campaigns; or, "My Claydonian is stuck to the ceiling!"
- 3 2** **Still More Outrages from the Mages** - John M. Maxstadt
Loads of great new spells that only a killer DM could possibly love.

Other Features

- 3 8** **Role-playing Reviews** - Jim Bambra
In the land of cartoon characters, death is a four-letter word.
- 4 6** **When Gods Walk the Earth** - Paul Jaquays
In Chaosium's RUNEQUEST® game, Divine Intervention is not divine at all.
- 5 8** **The Game Wizards** - James M. Ward
Bad puns, good games, and free-lance work at TSR, Inc.
- 6 0** **The Role of Computers** - Hartley, Patricia, and Kirk Lesser
Try a fantasy golf course to end all golf courses.
- 7 0** **Through the Looking Glass** - Robert Bigelow
How much damage can a BattleMech's lasers do? Find out in this column.
- 8 4** **Red Guns** - William Wilson Goodson, Jr.
Which is deadlier: your Marvel Universe® hero or a Soviet Hind helicopter?

Departments

3 Letters	56 TSR Previews	96 Dragonmirth
6 Sage Advice	80 Gamers Guide	100 Bludgeons & Flagons
8 Forum	88 Convention Calendar	102 SnarfQuest

COVER

If *Sports Illustrated* can have a swimsuit issue, so can we. Daniel Horne provides the cover artwork for this month: a ravishing Valkyrie on her magnificent Pegasus. Or that's what Lori told me it was. I haven't seen the artwork yet, really, but Lori said it was great. Christie Brinkley, eat your heart out.

LETTERS

What did you think of this issue? Do you have a question about an article or have an idea for a new feature you'd like to see? In the United States and Canada, write to: Letters, DRAGON® Magazine, PO. Box 111, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. In Europe, write to: Letters, DRAGON Magazine, TSR Ltd., 120 Church End, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge CB1 3LD, United Kingdom.

Odds & ends II

The following letters were actually received by the editors of DRAGON Magazine and, except for minor editing, appear as they were written.

Dear Dragon:

I'm a new subscriber, and I love your magazine. This is my first letter, so I have high hopes you'll answer me. This isn't your everyday letter. It deals with sexuality among the different races in the AD&D game. I hope you can answer the questions I was brave enough to ask. [Remainder of letter deleted by editor.]

Um... next!

Dear Dragon:

Being a high priest in good standing of Zeus, I am slightly perturbed at having been called upon or, as the case often is, yelled at to heal wounded fools who haven't sense enough to run from such dangers as red dragons or Asmodeus himself, or to chase away skeletons, zombies, and other such undead merely because the remaining members of the party have no wish to fight the beasts themselves.

If you please, explain to your readers that we clerics have studied to accomplish better things than to turn the undead and to heal idiots.

Certainly. We can't have that going on.

Dear Dragon:

A couple of years ago, I was in some mall in Penn. I saw a strange-looking man with dark sunglasses and a cane. It may have been my imagination but he met this lady. They started to talk about overthrowing TSR.

It was your imagination

Dear Dragon:

My character was recently *polymorphed* into a worm. Another character cut my worm/character in half. If both halves were each allowed to grow into two whole worms, then were *polymorphed* back to my character's regular form, would I have two identical characters? And since both parts are equal, I will not have to worry about them trying to kill each other, such as it would be with a clone, right?

Our sage refused to answer this question and handed the letter back to the editors. We think you will get two midgets instead of two normal characters, since each half of a worm grows back to form a shorter worm. You'll have to decide which half of the worm got the brains. Better still, perhaps you should take up chess.

Dear Dragon:

I would like to submit this article on dwarf mud wrestling. I am a 40-year-old homemaker and mother of two.

We almost accepted this article, which suggests that your editors should take up chess, too.

jDear Edictor.

I rote to yo avoubt 3 moith s ago and yout didn't asndteer. Mye charcter agot won of its folowers fptregndnt. what can I doo about thiso... My dungan gasyer said too cal dr Ruth about ist on Her nexst showe. I dont thind I should beleive him. He sayis he ist seroiws. Whot do yoo thindk. I alsot whant to knowed syhty there is nakerd babies on Led Zep; asblums.(is Houses of the Holydl). ;l + -0 Whyu do ythinmsk.

You're still not getting an answer.

Dear Dragon:

Is there such a thing as an elf sapper?

Yes, but you cannot get much sap from them.

Dear Dragon:

I particularly liked [issue # 129]. It was the best of your recent issues. One thing I missed was an illustration by Gustave Dore. His pictures have a real feeling for medieval times. Who is he? Is he a contemporary artist? Is he releasing any posters or the like?

Gustave Dore, the famed French painter and illustrator, died in 1883. He is not currently releasing any posters. His pictures had a real feeling for medieval times because he lived a lot closer to them than we do.

Dear Dragon:

Hello, I would like to know what the cow skulls are for.

Keeping cow's brains warm.

Continued on page 95

Legend

The mountain pass was called the Demon Tongue, which implied there might be a demon and treasure there, so the party headed for it right away. The characters were hungry for combat and cash - lots of each. I was the DM. We were gaming on the pool table in the medical company rec room in West Germany, a decade ago last fall.

Not many of the details of that adventure are left with me now, but I remember what happened when the adventurers got to the Demon Tongue. The paladin was the point man, mounted up and armored like a tank (he had volunteered for - no, demanded the position). Some distance behind, the wizard was checking the landscape with his *amulet of ESP*, hunting for enemy thoughts. Everyone else was gathered near the wizard, weapons ready. They were on a narrow road in the pass itself, with a slope up to the left and a sheer drop to the right, when the wizard got a reading.

I rolled the dice and checked the books. The party had found the demon, but the *amulet of ESP* had malfunctioned. I scribbled a note and passed it to the wizard's player. He read it and gave me an incredulous look.

"Hey, guys," said the wizard, reigning in his horse. "That demon is here, but that demon is the Demogorgon. We are doomed."

Everyone stared at the wizard's player, then at me. Everyone had read the *Monster Manual*. The entire party came to a halt. Then the characters began to guide their horses back the way they had come, looking around with nervous grins.

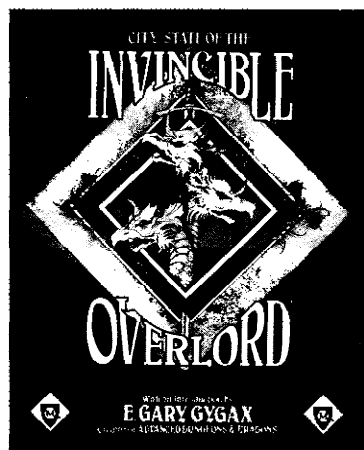
All but the paladin, that is. He stopped where he was, stood up in his stirrups, raised his sword, and shouted, "COME OUT AND FIGHT, YOU MISERABLE @\$ + \$&*&!!!" at the top of his lungs. Seconds later, a giant ball of darkness appeared on the road ahead.

Before anyone could react, one of the characters was *telekinesized* off his horse and hurled into the canyon beside the road. He took 20 dice of damage and became a memory. Every one of his companions bolted - except for the paladin, who roared, "SHOW YOURSELF, DEMON!!!" (The rest of the players screamed that they were riding

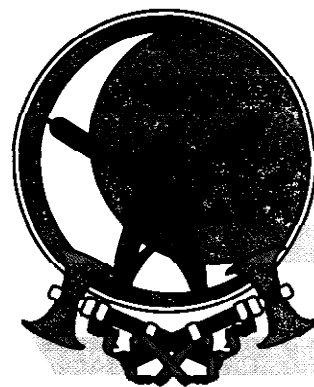
Continued on page 94

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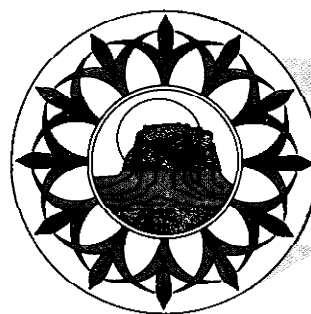
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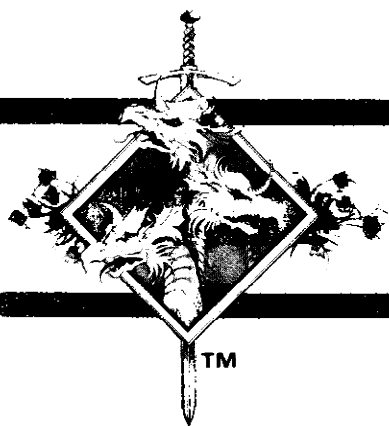
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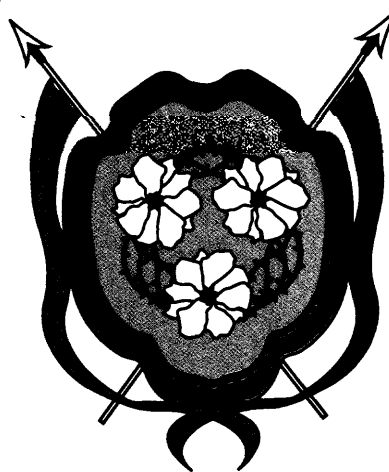




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A Complete World Adaptable to Any Fantasy Role-Playing System

SAGE ADVICE

by Skip Williams

If you have any questions on the games produced by TSR, Inc., "Sage Advice" will answer them. In the United States and Canada, write to: Sage Advice, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 111, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. In Europe, write to: Sage Advice, DRAGON Magazine, TSR Ltd., 120 Church End, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge CB1 3LD, United Kingdom

This month, "Sage Advice" covers a potpourri of questions on various topics related to TSR® games.

D&D® game

The D&D Expert Set says that only maidens can ride unicorns. How can my female PC become a maiden?

Females don't become maidens. Maidens are born, not made. In fantasy literature, a maiden is a young, unmarried woman. In the D&D game, a true maiden also has a Lawful alignment. You might also look up the word "virgin" in a dictionary.

At what level can PC mystics start on a path to Immortality? Does any path favor Mystics?

Mystics can seek immortality any time after reaching 16th level. A mystic's intense devotion to his discipline makes the Epic Hero the only suitable path for a mystic; the DM must decide if this is also the favored path (see the *Master DM's Book*, page 15).

Will a *weapon of wounding* negate a troll's regeneration ability in the D&D game?

Only insofar as the troll suffers the extra damage caused by the "wound" (1 hp per round). The troll can regenerate this damage, however.

STAR FRONTIERS® game

I enjoyed the article "Armored and Dangerous" in issue # 129 (page 70), but I have a few questions. Does the basic suit of powered armor come with a bodycomp and any special scanners? I assume there is a body comp because *Zebulon's Guide to Frontier Space* says that an enviro-

comp is required, and implies that a master-comp is also required.

The basic suit has no scanners, but it does have a bodycomp with a type D processor and a kingpack power supply. The standard progitis are: master-comp, med-inject (three of them), body-scan, and enviro-comp. Additional progitis can be added to the computer, up to the kingpack's 12-progit limit.

I like the helmet rafflurs and grenade launchers in *Zebulon's Guide*, but I can't find costs and weights for them.

As explained on page 70 of that book, helmet attachments cost 20% more than their regular counterparts. The weights of the helmet and regular versions are identical. Helmet rafflurs, for example are merely two rafflur M-1s attached to a helmet. The cost and weight of the rafflur M-1 are given on page 34 as 300 Cr and .50 kg. Therefore, helmet rafflurs cost 720 Cr ((300 X 2) X 1.2) and weigh 1 kg.

AD&D® game

Why does a paladin become a cavalier instead of a fighter when he loses his paladinhood?

With the appearance of *Unearthed Arcana*, paladins became a subclass of the cavalier, not the fighter.

Both the *Monster Manual I* and the *Best of DRAGON Magazine Anthology*, vol. III, say that halflings have a +3 "to hit" with missile weapons. Do PC halflings get this bonus in addition to any adjustments for dexterity?

No; the +3 bonus is given only to NPC halflings, who are assumed to spend a lot of time practicing with short bows or slings (as well as to have high dexterities). The +3 bonus applies only to these two weapons.

Are elves immune to *charm* effects that aren't from spells, such as a vampire's gaze or a harpy's song?

Elves and half-elves are resistant (not immune) to all forms of sleep and *charm*, including those above.

If a dwarven character and a human character got married and had kids, wouldn't their offspring be half-dwarves? What would the

racial characteristics of half-dwarves be?

We suppose that a human and a dwarf would produce a half-dwarf, if they could produce a child at all. Such a child, however, might be either a tall, hairless dwarf or a short, hairy human, as there are no half-dwarves in the AD&D game. While it is possible to create more crossbreeds than are already present in the AD&D game, we recommend that you stick with the ones in the rules.

Can humanoids such as gnolls or orcs use weapon specialization?

No; weapon specialization is for the fighter class only. We suppose that some very extraordinary humanoids might actually have fighter training and so could specialize. This would be very rare.

Here is my 8th-level troll thief. What do you think of him?

See the *DMG*, page 21, "The Monster as a Player Character" for the official view on this and all other cases like it involving monsters as PCs.

Can a character worship a deity from the pantheon of another race? Why or why not?

Yes, he can, but he might find himself outcast, accepted neither by his own race nor the race associated with the deity. This depends on how appropriate the deity is for the character. The Greek deity Hephaestus, for example, is very appropriate for dwarves or gnomes. Likewise, deities who are associated with a particular class are generally appropriate for any character of that class regardless of race. A dwarven worshiper of a giants' deity, however, is likely to be unwelcome wherever he goes. Clerics are a different matter; refer to the individual descriptions of each deity to determine which races the deity will accept as clerics.

When can a character build a stronghold and attract followers?

Characters who are allowed to construct strongholds in order to attract followers may do so when they reach "name" level. "Name" level is the level at which a class no longer gains additional hit dice or constitution bonuses (see *Unearthed Arcana*, page 12). *DRAGON* issue #117, pages 16-17 ("Feuds and Feudalism"), has some suggestions for midlevel strongholds as well. Any PC with the money may build a stronghold - but attracting followers other than the usual henchmen and hirelings could be difficult if the PC is of low level.

Which classes get a constitution bonus higher than +2 per hit die?

To be absolutely clear: fighters (including rangers and barbarians) and cavaliers (including paladins).

Do nonthief characters have any

chance to open locked chests or doors?

Only thieves can pick locks in the AD&D game. Other characters can try to force locked closures by making an open doors attempt or bend bars/lift gates roll, as per the *Players Handbook*, page 9. It is up to the DM to decide when and how a locked door or chest can be opened.

Do nonthief characters have any chance to listen at doors?

See page 60 of the DMG for nonthief hear *noise* attempts.

What is the effect of nonmagical exercise on ability scores?

Officially, none. All character classes are assumed to exercise to a degree appropriate to their professions, as a normal part of training for advancement. The less-physical classes fill in their nonadventuring time with study and mental exercises.

Can a character hold his breath and avoid the effects of gases?

Yes, it is possible for a character who suspects or detects poisonous gas *before* having to make a saving throw against it to hold his breath and avoid the effects of most gases. Some gases, such as green dragon breath, take effect on contact and cannot be avoided simply by holding one's breath. Rules for characters holding their breaths are given in the Dungeoneer's *Survival Guide*, page 12.

Do characters still get constitution bonuses to their hit points after reaching "name" level?

No. Once the character stops gaining new hit dice, he also stops gaining constitution bonuses.

When a character is raised or resurrected and loses a point of constitution, does he also lose bonus hit points? For example, would a 13th-level paladin with an 18 constitution lose 13 hp after being raised?

Yes, a character who loses a point of constitution loses all the bonus hit points that went with it. Note that the paladin in your example would have stopped gaining bonus hit points for constitution at level 9, so he would lose 9 hp. Some campaigns, rather than subtracting previously acquired hit points for the constitution loss, allow the PC to retain his old hit points but restrict new hit-point bonuses for constitution to the amount appropriate for the new constitution. For example, an 8th-level magic-user with a 16 constitution dies, is brought back to life, and loses a point of constitution. His hit points are unchanged, but when he earns his next level, he gets only a +1 bonus for his 15 constitution.

Page 13 of the DMG says that

adjustments due to aging will lower an ability score a full point, so that a -1 will reduce an 18/00 strength to 17. Yet under "Middle Aged," it says: "Subtract 1 point (or half *exceptional* rating) of strength." Please resolve this contradiction.

The text has been changed in a later printing of the DMG. When going from "Mature" to "Middle Aged," a character loses one point of strength or half the exceptional rating. Thereafter, any loss lowers strength a full point. A percent-age-rated 18 strength at middle age drops to 16 with the two-point loss at "Old."

If a character's intelligence, wisdom, or charisma score increases, can he make a new check for psionic ability?

Yes. The character may check for psionic ability each time his chance improves, but never when it gets worse. Fractions are dropped when calculating psionic potential, so the new number must round down to a number at least one point higher than the old number before the character is entitled to a new roll.

Can a character be awarded experience points for an adventure in which he dies?

Yes, but this is up to the DM. The DMG suggests an optional 1,000 xp bonus for dying (see pages 85-86). (The DMG also says that earned experience should be divided equally among the surviving characters; see page 85.) Survivors may be counted after all attempts to revive characters by magical means have been resolved.

If a character has been fighting or doing something very strenuous for a long time, would he still be able to use his strength bonuses?

See the fatigue rules on page 88 of the *Wilderness Survival Guide*.

What do you do with a character who has accumulated enough experience to advance more than one level?

Say that a 1st-level fighter earns 4,500 xp on an adventure, enough to make him a 3rd-level fighter. Does he simply train for 3rd level, or does he also have to spend time and money training for 2nd level at the same time?


Characters are limited to gaining one level at a time (see the DMG, page 86). If a character earns a windfall of experience, he gains only enough to place him within one point of the next highest level - the 1st-level fighter in the example would have 4,000 xp, one point short of 3rd level. The extra 500 xp are lost, and the character cannot gain additional experience until he completes his training for 2nd level.

How do you figure the training cost and time for a character who hasn't gone adventuring, such as a city NPC who earns all his money (and hence experience) through a business or service?

You figure them just as you would for an adventuring character (see the DMG, page 86). Substitute individual transactions or standard periods of time for adventures when rating overall performance.

Where can I get a map of Kara-Tur for inclusion in the WORLD OF GREYHAWK® setting? Where is Kara-Tur in relation to Oerik? I assume to the west, since Zeif, Ekbir, and their neighbors have a Middle-Eastern flavor.

Maps for Kara-Tur are now available for the FORGOTTEN REALMS™ setting in the form of a boxed set released in the fall of 1988. WORLD OF GREYHAWK setting DMs should have little trouble adapting this product for use with their campaigns. Otherwise, the section on the geography of Kara-Tur, starting on page 136 of *Oriental Adventures*, gives you all the information you need in order to make your own maps. DMs can place Kara-Tur anywhere they want in relation to Oerik, but the opposite side of Oerth is best. ♫



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FORUM

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I am writing this letter in response to some of the past letters in "Forum" concerning the topic of the low-level magic-user. Some of the letters have been a little too compassionate toward the poor little guy. Others, though, were saying that it's a tough world out there, and if you don't like it, well, that's life as a magic-user.

First, I think that some weapons like the sling, club, mace, flail, and hammer should be allowed because they are not too hard to learn how to use effectively. Also, there could be a penalty for the new weapons requiring two or more proficiency slots because these weapons were not originally intended for the magic-user class. If the character opts not to use one of the newly introduced weapons, however, he could get the bonus of an added nonweapon proficiency or added spell/cantrip.

Secondly, dealing with the problem of armor for our defenseless mage, a mage does *not* need to use any armor whatsoever. Just think for a minute here: If all the modifications that have been voiced in "Forum" were to be put into effect, we would come up with Joe, a 4th-level magic-user wearing chain mail and a ring of protection +3, carrying a short sword +4, with a 17 dexterity and a backpack holding his spell book and two potions of *giant strength*. Give a little thought to this guy for a minute; he has an armor class of -1! And if he and his buddies decide to go adventuring in the Dungeon of Death and happen to meet up with a band of spectres (say about a dozen or so), and the party's cleric is killed by a shambling mound in their last battle, we could have Joe the mage jump into the front row with all the warriors and kill off the spectres without wasting any of his precious spells.

Finally, a note on the hit-point debates: The mage does not need more hit points to survive. In fantasy literature, magic-users do not strive to be the healthiest people around. They rely instead on their magical nature and spell-casting abilities. If a player wants more hit points, he shouldn't have a magic-user.

Also, if you want to be able to protect yourself with good weaponry and armor, try running a ranger. You get armor, weapons, and magic-user spells, along with druidic spells. I hope that this debate is settled by the time the AD&D® 2nd Edition *Players Handbook* is published.

Tim Oakes
Berlin CT

Issue #134 presented some very educational reading. I particularly enjoyed the letter to "Forum" by Tim Lieberg. I applaud his attempt to improve on a situation that so many other people have failed to do effectively. I myself have been doing many of the same things that Tim suggests to realign the powers of 1st-level magic-users. I do not fully agree with him on his views on cantrips; however, I am not using the cantrip system quite how it was presented, and I am not prepared to actively disagree with him.

I am writing to state my belief that too many AD&D game players these days put too much emphasis on combat, and thus can only think of 1st-level magic-users as one-shot *sleep* spells. Even though Tim's article centered entirely on the magic-user, much could be learned about the other classes by applying the theories in Tim's article to those other classes. I have noticed a general tendency of late to add power to the low-level characters of all classes. Specific examples of power boosting can be seen in: weapon specialization, new character die-rolling methods, new statistics minimums for 1st-level characters, and the addition of cantrips (to name a few). This tendency, I believe, stems from the fact that most players and DMs believe that the game is centered on combat.

I am not arguing with the fact that the game itself is a combat-heavy system. I am merely pointing out the fact that there are many more things that a low-level party could do besides fight everything that it sees. Players become bored with noncombative activity and put pressure on the DM to liven things up a bit. This leads to other problems. Too many times have I played in games in which each and every encounter forces the party to rest or heal up. This usually causes the DM to warp the rules on spell memorization, to include multiple regaining of spells during a day's time. At higher levels, this also causes the DM to allow much more healing or even boost the effects of the standard potions or spells. Fighters and clerics start to look like Sherman tanks, bristling with magical weaponry, armor, and healing spells. Magic-users start to look like artillery units, each boasting several wands, rings, cloaks, etc.

My point is that combat should be deemphasized right from the beginning. Characters should have more to strive for than just more power and wealth. Use of noncombative skills should be rewarded by experience points and some form of praise for those who skillfully role-play their characters. If this is done, then ultimately the players might be more willing to accept those things presented to them which add depth, instead of power, to their characters. "The Mystic College" (issue #123) presented a perfect example of such. I know of very few campaigns where such an idea would go over well with the players or wizards. "Why would I want to waste my money on *that*!" is the response that usually comes back. The idea that one should spend money in order to gain prestige or a good reputation is alien to most.

Many DMs complain that their players' char-

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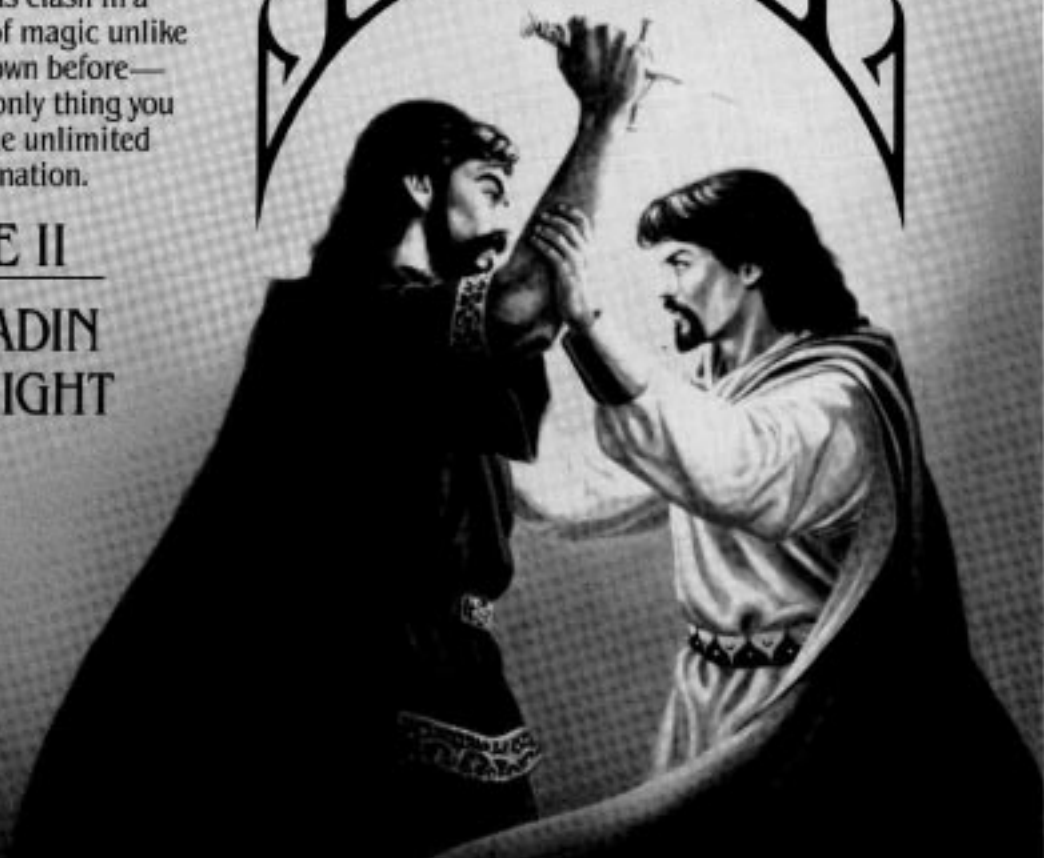
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acters become too powerful for the monsters, or that they become too rich. True enough! Then the DMs go one step further and blame the new rules or articles in DRAGON Magazine. I propose that DMs should look to their policy in bringing up the characters from low levels in order to find out where the fault lies!

R. J. Wenzel
Lancaster CA

The DMG says [DMs should] give out experience points for gold pieces on a one-for-one basis if the value of the guardian equals or exceeds that of the party which took the treasure. The DMG then says that this is a compromise, and a more realistic system would be too boring and would disrupt the game flow. Then it gives a system for level advancement that has the characters spend gold to gain levels.

I believe a better system wouldn't give experience for gold at all unless that gold were spent on training. In one stroke, you could provide for level advancement with no training and also take the gold, with the players feeling that they are getting a valuable exchange.

Thus, if Ned Nimblefingers the thief is stealing without the Thieves' Guilds knowledge, he would be foolish to try and go to the Guild to buy training. In that case, he would only earn experience for performing his jobs, and it would take longer for him to gain a level, though he would have more money. If Ned was a member of the Guild, then he could add as many experience points to his total as he paid on his Guild dues. This would simulate [his association with] the older, more experienced thieves and [use of the] training devices that the Guild owns.

In the first case, Ned could earn 1,000 xp and 2,000 gp in five jobs. In the second case, Ned could have earned the same amount but might also have had to pay out 25% of his take to the Guild, which would be 500 gp (adding another 500 xp to his experience total).

Clerics and wizards would gain experience for each new magical spell they research, successful or not, and each magical item they create that they have never created before.

Fighters would gain experience on the money spent for training and on the number of troops they command (everybody respects a man with 1,000 men at his beck and call).

You get the idea. The characters get experience for doing the things their classes are noted for. A magic-user isn't going to get any experience for running an army, and a fighter won't get any for trying to research a spell.

Finally I come to the point of getting experience for magical items. I don't understand how picking up a wand, pointing it, and saying the right word is going to gain any experience. Maybe figuring out the right word to say will gain experience for the person who figured it out, if the problem was hard enough. Making the wand in the first place would have been hard, but the way the DMG is written, you don't gain any experience for that.

I have been playing the AD&D game since January 1982 and had a DM who had been playing since the very beginning. He had worked it out so that PCs didn't get experience for gold and didn't have to train for level advancement. Other groups I played in would give experience for gold but no training for level advancement. I believe that my system will balance out some of the problems and fairly award experience for actions performed by the characters.

James M. Rogers
McConnelsville OH

Yes, the standard method of distributing experience according to monsters slain and treasures won is fairly well balanced and fair. Yes, it is much better than methods using training or class-related activities or even [giving experience only for slaying] monsters.

So, do I use the standard experience-point system? Of course not!

My old DM did, and he spent a few hours after every adventure adding up the experience points from all the monsters killed, then letting us add in the treasure and any special bonuses or penalties. I am simply too lazy for that.

Before I start an adventure, I decide approximately how many experience points I want the characters to get when the adventure ends. If they did well and defeated all the challenges, they get that many experience points, plus any bonuses I award. If they did poorly, they only get part of it. The final result has more to do with how long I want it to be until they hit next level than how many monsters they killed and how much treasure they found.

This lets me control just how fast they rise in levels. If I have an adventure ready for next time that is a little too tough for them, I award [more experience points].

Sometimes simpler is better.

Tommy Sronce
Fort Worth TX

I would like to throw my two cents worth in on an item I noticed in "Forum" in issue #136, from David Carl Argall, which was the latest comment in a continuing discussion regarding the accrual of experience points.

In my eight-year career as a Dungeon Master, I have never given any experience points for magical items found, and at present, I give no experience for gold. (I used to give some experience points for gold pieces gained, in a ratio of 1 xp per 10 gp obtained. I no longer do even this.)

Further, with only one lamentable exception, no Dungeon Master I have ever played with ever gave his players points in this manner. In that exception, I took a human thief character from 6th level to 14th in only 10 weeks! I freely admit that we played a lot, two to four sessions per week and six to eight hours per session, and we had some incredible hauls of treasure, but I maintain that giving experience points for magical items and gold is neither worthwhile nor balanced.

As an example, I am currently running a campaign that is six scenarios old. Most of the characters have crossed their thresholds for 2nd level and now await an opportunity to train. I believe that this rate (five to six adventures to go from 1st to 2nd level) is a reasonable and balanced progression through the ranks. I give experience points for actions other than combat, such as spell-casting, thieving functions, and actions in accordance with the character's alignment. I admit that this system is a bit complex, but if you keep on top of it, the accounting is not that bad.

Mr. Argall states that training is dull and is to be kept in the background. I must disagree with him yet again. As a Dungeon Master, it's a real trip at training time to watch the players huddle over their sheets, calculating whether they can afford to train, buy new equipment, and still eat on the funds they have. When the player of a 1st-level character in my world discovers that it will cost 1,800 gp to be trained to 2nd level, the expression on his face is priceless! I use training as a major method (along with taxes) of siphoning off a party's wealth, and it works like a charm. The shoe fits on the other foot as well.

As a player, many times I have squirmed over my calculator and had to finagle loans from other characters to finance my character's training.

Nelson E. Hemstreet
Brick NJ

For quite some time now, I've read the polemics about how the AD&D game is a different game from the old D&D game, and how the new Mentzer D&D game is the true descendant of the old D&D game. I beg to differ. I have researched copies of all the D&D and AD&D games, and I have come to some easily proven conclusions:

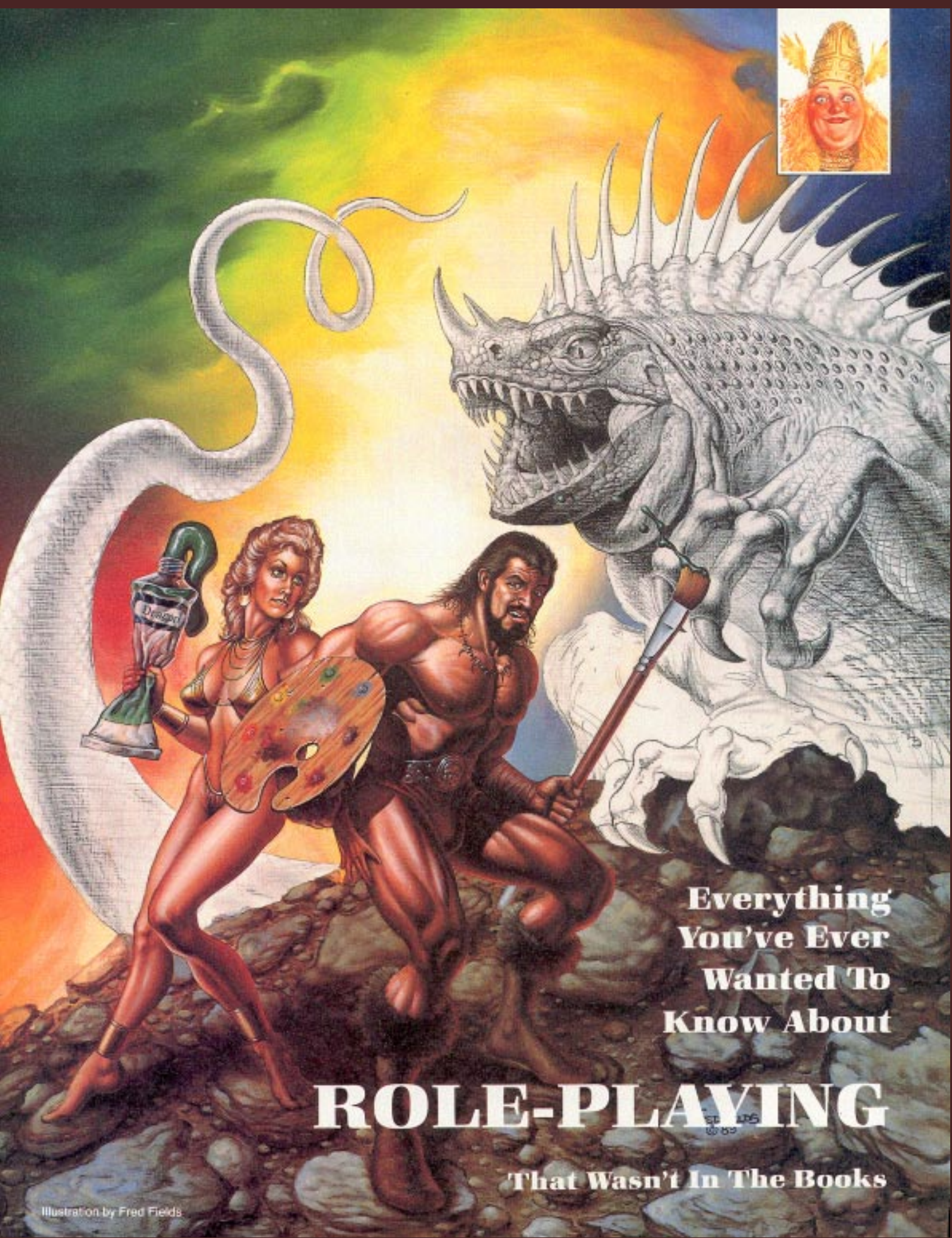
1. The AD&D game is the original D&D game put into hard covers, with the rougher edges filed down. Almost everything in the DMG, *Players Handbook*, and *Monster Manual* is from the original three books (with the *Blackmoor*, *Greyhawk*, and *Eldritch Wizardry* expansion books) or the early DRAGON and *The Strategic Review* issues. For example: artifacts and relics from *Eldritch Wizardry* (page 41) are now in the DMG, page 155; the bard character class, from TSR #6, is now in the *Players Handbook* (pages 117-119); the ranger character class, from TSR #2, is now in the *Players Handbook* (pages 24-25); the druid character class, from *Eldritch Wizardry* (page 1), is in the *Players Handbook* (page 20-21); and the thief, dwarf, paladin, elf, hobbit (now halfling), and half-elf, from *Greyhawk* (pages 1-12), are now in the *Players Handbook*, (pages 15-30). Most of the treasures in the DMG first appeared in those small paper-bound books. The game matured a bit in the rewriting and reprinting into hard covers, but the major difference between the version is that everything has been made easier for the players than it was in the earlier three-book-plus set.

2. The new D&D game is actually the latest rewrite, of the D&D game. This game IS different, relies more on skill [than does the AD&D game], and is MUCH better [than the AD&D game]. It is a carefully thought-out game designed for play up to very high levels with challenge all the way. [The monsters are relatively stronger than their counterparts in the D&D game, the characters are relatively weaker], and in the D&D game, the monsters have more friends, too. An AD&D game fire giant has a 25% chance of having 1-4 hell hounds; a D&D game fire giant has an 80% chance for 3-18 hell hounds and a 20% chance for 1-3 hydras. Experience-point awards are smaller in the D&D game, and you don't even get experience points for magic, period (this corrects itself, though, as it takes fewer experience points to advance to levels higher than the first nine).

This is an answer for all those folks who think of the new D&D game as being for "kids." I believe that any player who tries it will find, as I have, that the new D&D game, not the so-called ADVANCED D&D® game, is skill-based.

Ivy K. Reynolds
Portland OR

Continued on page 79



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A Field Guide to Game-Convention Ornithology

Is that a Common Worrywort or a
Spoon-billed Kibitzer?

Most campers and hikers find bird and animal watching to be pleasant additions to their outdoor activities. Gamers can engage in the same enjoyable distractions – and not just at game conventions, either. Many of the unusual species described in this article can be spotted in your own living room or den whenever there is a role-playing or war game in progress. Good close-up views of a few of these species can also be had in store windows and bathroom mirrors.

Birds are far and away the most common and visible forms of game-convention wildlife. They can be found in all convention habitats and display a wide range of calls and behaviors, many of them annoying.

Normal ornithologists have a distinct advantage when identifying different avian species, as normal birds come in a variety of **sizes**, shapes, and colors. Not so with game-convention species: They *all* look alike. The usual plumage of game-convention birds consists of a tight T-shirt (which displays a ubiquitous abdominal bulge), ratty shorts, tattered sneakers or loafers, and the obligatory satchel or stack of rule books. A grimy baseball cap is common but optional. This sameness makes visual identification impossible, so it is best to rely on habitat, activity, and sometimes voice. Some of the most common species. to look for follow, in no particular order.

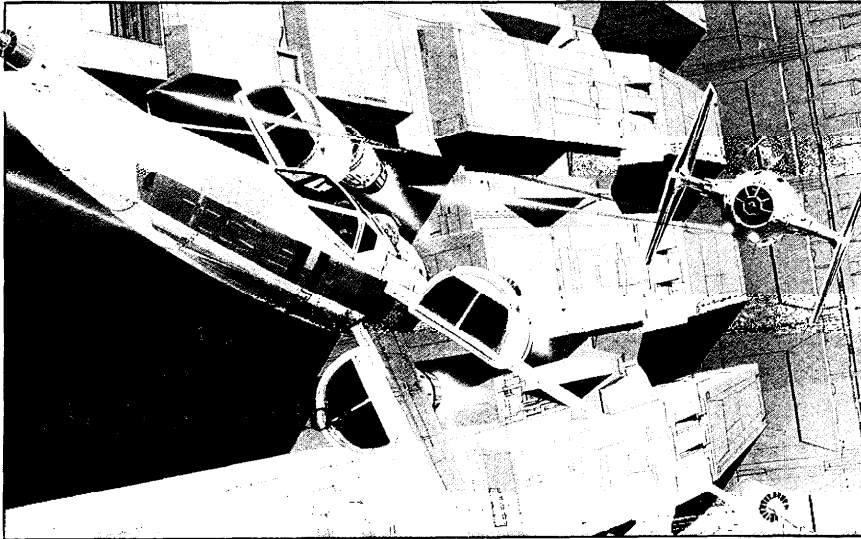
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The answers are
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Ruffle-necked Windsprinter

(*Quixotious impetuous*)

This bird is found only in role-playing areas. It can be distinguished by its excessive energy (rare among sedentary gamers), and it cannot sit still for more than two minutes. It can always be found either trying to get the GM's attention or engaging in some inane game activity, such as interrogating the town drunk, helping little old ladies across the street, or tilting at windmills. This bird doesn't care what it does as long as it's the center of attention. Windsprinters like to be game referees so that they can be in the limelight all the time. This bird can often be recognized by its oft-repeated and plaintive call, "Isn't there anything to do?" Some of the more vocal specimens of this species might be confused with the Spotted Chatterbox. Close observation, however, will reveal that the Windsprinter actually pays attention to the GM and has its character do things.

Bull-headed Slasher

(*Anarchistus desperadus*)

A close relative of the Ruffle-necked Windsprinter, this bird should migrate to the traditional war-game habitats where killing things is all there is to do. Unfortunately, this species lacks the historical background and the understanding of strategy and tactics required for success in the war-gaming habitats, so it remains among the role-players. Like the Windsprinter, the Slasher is seldom satisfied with what is actually happening in the game, so it seeks to create its own action. Such action almost always involves combat, but the Slasher can make do with anything that requires a die roll instead of thought. Not satisfied with helping little old ladies across streets, the Slasher tries to throw them under speeding wagons, chop them into little pieces, or at least pick their pockets. A Slasher never tilts at windmills (windmills don't bleed), but it will cast bolts of lightning into crowded bars. Occasionally, a Slasher will bite off more than it can chew, whereupon it mutates into a Why Me? Bird.

Common Worrywort

(*Paranoidus certinus*)

The gaming birds known as the Worryworts (*genus Paranoidus*) are most commonly found in role-playing habitats, although the board-game and miniatures areas have their shares of them. All Worryworts appear to have a symbiotic attachment to their characters or gaming pieces (even to those assigned to them 10 minutes ago). The Worrywort lives in constant fear that some harm will befall its character. While all good role-players suffer for their characters, the Worryworts suffer with them.

For example, the Common Worrywort is certain that the referee is out to get his character or the character's entire party.

Common Worryworts find it impossible to negotiate with NPCs, and they conduct dungeon adventures like bomb-squad missions. The pining calls of these birds attract Windsprinters, Slashers, and Spoon-billed Kibitzers like bees to honey. Occasionally, though, particularly intelligent specimens of Worryworts are encountered which are actually capable of formulating workable plans.

Common Naysayer

(*Paranoidus pessimist*)

This Worrywort bird can find at least one reason why any given plan will not work, and it can manufacture at least a dozen horrible consequences for any given failure. This bird's gloomy outlook can drive even a Rubber-necked Butt-in into a fit of depression, although a Lesser Kibitzer can often persuade a party to temporarily ignore the Naysayer.

Goldbricker

(*Paranoidus milksop*)

This Worrywort bird cannot tolerate any damage to its character. Goldbrickers prefer to play warriors or priests (fighters with over 100 hp and more armor than the U.S.S. New Jersey are perennial favorites with the species). When a fight breaks out, the Goldbricker's character heads straight for the rear (if it isn't there already), even if the opponent is an

arthritic goblin. This habit often causes the bird to be confused with the Get Behind, an altogether different creature. If the character's hasty retreat fails to take it to safety, the Goldbricker will do all it can to obliterate the opponent before the opponent gets an attack, stopping only long enough to berate the GM for not allowing its character to win initiative. If its character is damaged, the Goldbricker will immediately use its most potent healing magic (if it has any) or whine pitifully until someone cures all its character's damage, even if all opponents are dead and the character still has 99 hp left.

Don't Waste It Bird


(*Paranoidus frugalis*)

A close relative of the Goldbricker, this Worrywort bird hordes everything: spells, gold, and especially charged magical items. It can be immediately distinguished from its cousin by its distinctive call (e.g., "No, I won't use my wand; it has only 57 charges left on it.").


Barrel-chested Loudspeaker Bird

(*Vociferous stridentus*)

Usually heard but not seen, this bird's piercing call is audible almost everywhere within a crowded game room. The call is usually sufficient to disrupt games in the bird's immediate vicinity. This strange behavior is triggered when the bird thinks



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it sees someone it knows on the other side of the room. Unfortunately, the bird never gets a response because the target person has been misidentified or cannot hear the call because he is out of range. When the Loudspeaker Bird gets no response, it will repeat its strident call with foghorn regularity until it grows hoarse or gets clipped in the beak. Angry remonstrations of a nonphysical nature from nearby GMs and players are always ignored, although a Lesser Kibitzer can usually induce this bird to lapse into five minutes of bemused silence by suggesting that the Loudspeaker Bird actually walk the short distance to the target person and converse normally.

Spotted Chatterbox

(*Vociferous verbosus*)

A close relative of the Loudspeaker Bird, the Spotted Chatterbox lacks its cousin's volume and power, but it makes up for this by chattering nonstop, pausing only occasionally for breath. It has learned to space these pauses, however, so that the GM and players think they're getting a word in edgewise. Its constant habit of interrupting everybody often causes it to be misidentified as a Ruffle-necked Wind-sprinter, but the Spotted Chatterbox never says anything worth hearing. Occasionally, a GM or party manages to get on with the game in spite of the Chatterbox; this doesn't bother the bird at all, as it simply selects a new victim and chatters away. This habit makes the Chatterbox a terrible hazard to any Spoon-billed Kibitzers hovering about the game.

Are-you-sure-you-heard-me

(*Prolix adnauseus*)

This bird can be found nearly everywhere, though it prefers games where a Spotted Chatterbox is already causing confusion and providing a smoke screen for the Are-you-sure-you-heard-me's activities. This bird has an uncanny ability to pick the worst possible time to tell a referee what it intends to do, then judge the possible results and rebroadcast a slightly altered version a moment later. An Are-you-sure-you-heard-me will never accept the fact that it has made an error; instead, it insists that it wasn't properly understood. If allowed to repeat itself often enough, it can transform even the silliest action into a brilliant operation. Skilled Are-you-sure-you-heard-mes are able to make this transformation virtually undetectable.

Why Me? Bird

(*Obstreperous excusus*)

This gaming bird can be identified by its unparalleled bad judgment and its adamant refusal to accept any blame for the often fatal consequences of its ill-considered actions. The Why Me? Bird has one of the most complex songs of all convention birds, sometimes so prolonged that the bird is mistaken for a Spotted Chatter-

box. A typical excerpt runs like this: "I had to open that chest or the thief would've gotten all the treasure, and if the fighter hadn't led us into that nest of scorpions, the cleric wouldn't have had to use his antipoison spell on him, and besides, he should have had *two* antipoison spells. . . ."

Rubber-necked Butt-in

(*Omnisciencea cad*)

This particularly obnoxious bird often inhabits role-playing games, hoping that the GM will ask the party to designate a caller. Other specimens prefer miniatures games where they can steal the other players' thunder under the guise of acting as overall commander. The Butt-in has the amazing ability to control several characters or units simultaneously, stepping on other players' toes with impunity and citing superior experience (or bigger fists) as justification. If left uncontrolled, this pest will usurp the prerogatives of every other player at the table; experienced referees use gags, muzzles, or straitjackets to exert proper control. Rubber-necked Butt-ins sometimes join flocks of Spoon-billed Kibitzers, but they only do this in order to attack GMs.

Spoon-billed Kibitzer

(*Omnisciencea maximus*)

This bird generally shuns role-playing areas, being cowed by the GM's presence. Its favorite habitat is the board-game area, where it can quietly watch a game in progress and quickly offer unsolicited advice before anyone can stop it. Occasionally, large flocks of Spoon-billed Kibitzers will descend on a role-playing game, however, where they exchange comments with each other as the game progresses. These flocks are skilled at staying out of the GM's hearing range while making sure they can be overheard by at least two players.

Lesser Kibitzer

(*Belatus sagacious*)

This close relative of the Spoon-billed Kibitzer is never found in flocks; in fact, it occasionally actually joins games. Like the Rubber-necked Butt-in, this bird has ideas for every character, but it always offers suggestions instead of issuing commands. The Lesser Kibitzer often withholds its advice until *after* a player has made an error, then explains its own ideas. Unfortunately, by that time it's too late for the advice to do any good. This tactic frustrates players but usually placates referees when the Kibitzer is not a player. When functioning as a player, this bird often remains detached from the game for long periods of time, and in this passive mode it can actually be mistaken for a Great Groggy Tortoise. Once the Kibitzer settles down in this way, only a prolonged session of dithering will rouse it. Once so roused, however, there is no way to stop the stream of advice coming from the bird.

When the Lesser Kibitzer is operating in this fashion, it often appears to be a Rubber-necked Butt-in, but it may be distinguished from the latter by its politeness. Like the Ruffle-necked Windsprinter, the Lesser Kibitzer often prefers to be a referee, where its smarts can be more fully appreciated.

Crested Falsetto Bird

(*Androchauvinus superficialis*)

Curiously, no females of this species have ever been observed. This bird is undetectable until it is given a female character to play. When this happens, the bird immediately begins primping and preening and adopts an ear-wrenching falsetto voice. When it does drop its adopted voice, it is usually only to give the GM witty instructions, such as: "My character goes off and does girl stuff."

Fisher Rex

(*Deceptus ex cathedra*)

There is a theory that the Fisher Rex is not a true species at all, but merely a mutated Rubber-necked Butt-in or Lesser Kibitzer. This bird is found only as a referee, and it delights in giving players equivocal or incomplete information in order to force them to make serious blunders. Dealing with this bird can be particularly frustrating, as it often drops subtle hints and clues that will reveal the truth if they are noticed in time. This insidious bird can even fool a Common Worrywort, though its favorite prey is the Walking Sucker Catfish. The Fisher Rex also takes a heavy toll of Conclusion Hoppers.

Blue-faced Role-player

(*Rantus vaudevillius*)

The bird is named for its habit of role-playing until it is blue in the face. It is found only in role-playing habitats. Large flocks of them regularly gather at the most exclusive and prestigious role-playing events. Their favorite call is: "I don't care which character you give me." It is often voiced just as the bird comes to roost. Great Groggy Tortoises prefer to act as GMs for players of this species, since these birds are capable of running an entire game all by themselves. (This ability infuriates Ruffle-necked Windsprinters, but Lesser Kibitzers don't seem to notice.) Individuals of this species will invariably fall into confusion when confronted with a situation that requires the application of common sense or game logic, and thus they often fall prey to the Fisher Rex.

Convention Organizer

(*Travailus exhaustus*)

A few respected ornithologists maintain that this bird does not exist at all, and indeed this species is seldom seen. The fact that these birds are similar to the legendary phoenix helps to maintain their mystique: Each individual disappears yearly, only to rise again from the ashes of

old conventions. Some subspecies have been known to disappear and reappear on a quarterly basis. Typical specimens exhibit an overall rumpled appearance and a jaundiced expression. This is usually not helpful in identifying them, as all convention gamers tend to look like this, especially on days three and four of a four-day convention. On closer inspection, however, an observer will note that this bird has an inexplicably belligerent attitude (actually caused by ignorant conventioners who insist on feeding these birds too many stupid questions and inane complaints). While this bird is not always dangerous, observers should take special care, as the smallest misstep can cause an outbreak of frenzied violence. Usually, however, the Convention Organizer will issue a warning call first, such as: "Clear out of here! I've got an event scheduled in this room in two minutes!" Such warnings can be ignored only at extreme peril.

Great Crested Rules Lawyer

(*Proctus obstructus*)

This bird is arguably the worst pest of all convention birds. While it is usually less obnoxious than the Rubber-necked Butt-in, it has a wider living range, encompassing all convention habitats (it is rumored, however, to be quite respected in board-game areas). Generally innocuous, the Great Crested Rules Lawyer becomes immediately noticeable when it begins its distinctive behavior and song. The bird squares its shoulders; throws out its chest, and clears its throat with an audible "ahem." Thereafter, it pontificates about the rules currently in play. When in full song, it resembles a Spotted Chatterbox, but it can be distinguished by the monotony of its recitations. Several things can trigger this behavior, the two most common being the appearance of a monster the party has never encountered before, and the sight of anyone reaching for a rule book.

All Great Crested Rules Lawyers actually know their rule books by heart with only a few (usually quite convenient) holes in

memory, and they can quote the rules verbatim. Some specimens can actually recite the rules backwards – this is not as impressive as it seems because these individuals tend to try to apply the rules backwards as well. Unfortunately, even when this bird remembers the words frontward, it often does not know what they mean. The same methods used to control Rubber-necked Butt-ins will usually quell the Great Crested Rules Lawyer's outbursts, but some referees like to add a smack from a cattle prod, too.

Other Notable Species

While you enjoy watching the many varieties of convention birds, be sure to keep an eye out for these game-convention plants and animals.

Look-see Creeper

(*Encroachus agosus*)

This vine can be found growing right at the referee's elbow. When the plant is full grown, it is impossible for the referee to move without brushing against it. The vine's everquesting tendrils constantly try to sneak a peek behind the referee's screen and often succeed at knocking the screen over. A shrublike subspecies grows at the foot of a gaming table, where it can get a look at the adjacent referee's materials.

Get Behind

(*Poltronus skulk*)

There are two distinct subspecies of this annoying rodent, both of which inhabit role-playing areas. The first, the Back Biter, prefers to play thieves and assassins, but it plays characters from other classes in the same manner. This rodent is constantly circling, climbing walls, flying, and otherwise trying to get behind any opponent encountered. It has been known to become very angry at GMs who allow it to be spotted either before or after it makes its back attacks. The second subspecies, the Hide Behind, often resembles a Goldbricker. It spends all its time cowering

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under cover, emerging only to launch missile attacks. Both subspecies will panic if confronted by a foe who can see or melee with them.

Great Groggy Tortoise

(*Stuperous oblivious*)

This reptile is often overlooked amid the hurly-burly of a convention. It likes to drowse in the body heat of other gamers, and can be found quietly snoozing at gaming tables, its appendages and head wrapped in a semifetal position. It is known for being able to sleep even through the blustering of a Loudspeaker Bird, and one specimen has even been seen with a Spotted Chatterbox perched on its carapace. The tortoise can sometimes be roused in order to roll a die, but thereafter it dozes off again. Great Groggy Tortoises can sometimes be found running morning games, much to the chagrin of Ruffle-necked Windsprinters and the delight of Are-you-sure-you-heard-mes.

Walking Sucker Catfish

(*Clodus faux pas*)

This amphibious fish resembles the walking catfish of the southeastern United States. When confronting other players, it can be a hardy and tenacious foe. It has one great weakness, however – it always takes a referee at his word, making it an easy target for the Fisher Rex. Many specimens have reportedly taken bait, hook, line, sinker, and pole.

Conclusion Hopper

(*Spurious prejudgus*)

This insect can be found almost everywhere, except in face-to-face board-gaming habitats (although it can be found in double-blind and PBM board games). The Conclusion Hopper is always willing to make a decision based on an assumption or incomplete information. Once this insect reaches a conclusion, it is almost impossible to convince it that it is wrong. In fact, it is usually able to convince other players that it is right. A Conclusion Hopper that has just made a disastrous conclusion often resembles a Why Me? Bird.

Point Hound

(*Cupidius enfant terrible*)

Though this bothersome canine occupies the same habitats as the Blue-faced Role-player, it does not care about role-playing for its own sake. It only cares about being recognized for role-playing.

All Point Hounds belong to a huge conclave whose territory covers most of the continental U.S. and southern Canada, with smaller packs in places as widely scattered as Alaska, Germany, and Norway. Communication within the conclave is remarkably efficient; even the most distant and isolated members always know what the other members have been up to. They probably cover such vast distances by howling in relays (see below), but no

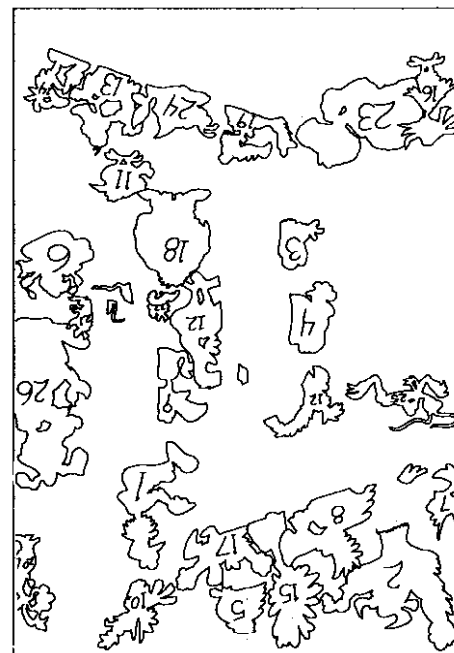
one knows for sure. Point Hounds typically travel in packs of three to seven individuals, but even these tend to split up when unleashed upon a convention. When two Point Hounds from different packs meet, they usually engage in a dominance tussle, and the Hound with the highest status within the conclave invariably wins. Lone Point Hounds are more pests than threats, although when role-playing they have been known to turn on fellow players and shred them at the drop of a hat. Point Hound GMs will ignore all other species and give their attention only to other Point Hounds.

Point Hounds appear to be exceptionally intelligent, but they are merely sly and devious. They often instigate elaborate subterfuges in order to get what they want, even when what they desire is easily obtainable (like event tickets) or totally imaginary (like the advancement advantages gained from sitting in a certain position at the gaming table). When not role-playing, they loll about tournament headquarters with their long, wet tongues hanging out, waiting for the results from their last event to be calculated and posted. If kept out of headquarters, they make nuisances of themselves by scratching and sniffing at the door. In any case, their incessant yipping and whining about point totals, advancements, and who probably took first place can try the patience of even the most saintly referee or convention worker.

When results are finally posted, all Point Hounds in the area will sit next to the sheet and howl at it. When other Point Hounds hear this, they immediately rush to the sheet and join in. Eventually, every unoccupied Point Hound at the convention will join the chorus, producing pandemonium that is audible for miles.

When encountered in a pack, Point Hounds are more confident, more noisy, and more rude, though usually not dangerous. If a potential victim is cornered, however, trouble is sure to ensue, as even a lone Point Hound becomes bold and downright vicious. Experienced tournament organizers often carry chairs and whips to guard against such possibilities. Muzzles and bludgeons are useless; an enraged Point Hounds slaving jaws and pin head will always slip a muzzle, and an attacking Point Hound is so single-minded that it simply doesn't notice blows to any part of its anatomy.

Many Point Hounds have a chameleon power that makes them look just like a normal gamer or one of the species mentioned previously. This has led at least one tournament organizer to collar and tag them for easy identification.



26. Point Hound
25. Conclusion Hopper
24. Walking Sucker Catfish
23. Great Groggy Tortoise
22. Hide Behind (Get Behind)
21. Back Biter (Get Behind)
20. Look-see Creeper
19. Great Crested Rules Lawyer
18. Convention Organizer
17. Blue-faced Role-player
16. Fisher Rex
15. Crested Falsetto Bird
14. Lesser Kibitzer
13. Spoon-billed Kibitzer
12. Rubber-necked Butt-in
11. Why Me? Bird
10. Are-you-sure-you-heard-me
9. Spotted Chatterbox
8. Barrel-chested Loudspeaker Bird
7. Don't Waste It Bird
6. Goldbricker
5. Common Naysayer
4. Another Common Worrywort
3. Common Worrywort
2. Bull-headed Slasher
1. Ruffle-necked Windsprinter

**Convention
Wildlife Key**

le-vi-a-than (lə-vī'ə-thən) n. —a mythic sea creature of unbelievable size and power.

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NAME: SHIVA

ARMAMENT:

SPINAL: Type E

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SECONDARY: (6) batteries of (5) 37.5/30 lasers

TERTIARY: (18) turrets

(12) 7.5/30 lasers

(6) 37.5/20 lasers

NOTE— (4) 7.5/30 lasers have been replaced with

HELL missile launchers.

WARNING*WARNING***WARNING**

Type E Spinal mount: 2133 meter mass driver

Speed: UNKNOWN —approaching relativistic.

Yield: UNKNOWN —Roughly equal to 150 hell rounds.



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Cheating has always been one of the most fascinating parts of gambling. Las Vegas is alive with fascinating tales of clever scoundrels who each developed a new scam – from the man with a long crooked wire he uses to “fix” the slot machine, to the poker player with mirrored sunglasses (which she takes off and sets on the table, to reflect the cards that she deals). These knaves provide us all with two important benefits. First, the stories about them are entertaining. There is something funny about the “drunk” who walks up to the roulette wheel and places his bets on ambiguous points on the wheel, then argues loudly about how his bets were “actually” placed. Second, the stories are educational. We learn what tricks have been tried and how to catch and counter them.

The purpose of this article is both to entertain and to educate. Some of the tricks detailed herein are amusing, some are brash, and some are utterly ludicrous. Furthermore, once you’ve read about them, you’ll know how to look for them when others try them on you.

That any readers of this magazine might actually try such tricks themselves is, of course, a fantasy to be instantly dismissed.

The die is cast. . . .

Dice are fun. You can do all sorts of things with them. Just a slight rounding of one corner of a six-sided die will have an astonishing effect. To cause the die to roll higher than normal, just shave the corner where the 1, 2, and 3 meet.

No die is perfect, of course. You can often find a die that rolls consistently high or low because of some flaw in the casting. One die I owned – “Old Reliable” – had an almost incredible record of rolling 1s. I once got a record of fifteen 1s in a row with it. I was playing SPI’s WAR IN EUROPE game at the time; in the air-war sequence, a roll of 1 killed an enemy aircraft. Soon the other players caught on, and that one die became very popular. After a few weeks, we started taking turns – the Russian player got to use it, then the German player, then the Western Allies Player. That die never let us down.

Finally, in a unique three-way consensus among warring nations, we took “Old Reliable” out to a driveway and bashed it into powder with a sledgehammer.

The interesting question that I still wonder about is, were we cheating when we used a die with a manufacturing defect?

Percentile dice offer even more opportunities for cheating. To generate numbers from 0 to 99, you roll two 10-sided dice, reading the results of one die as the tens digit and the other as the ones digit. A roll of eight and five is 85 – but it might also be 58.

The average roll using two 10-sided dice to return a 0-99 result is 49.5. Simply neglect to specify which die is high and

which is low, and the mean value of your roll can be as low as 34.65 or as high as 64.35. This has quite a powerful effect in gaming.

But there’s another, more subtle effect you can get with percentile dice. Lots of gamers roll the two dice sequentially, first rolling the tens die and then the ones die. It draws out the suspense, and it certainly makes it obvious which die is which.

If you are rolling the dice and are fast enough, you can play a very naughty little game. Roll the tens die, and quickly decide whether or not you want to keep the result. If you don’t like it, roll the die for the ones digit – and use it to knock the tens die flying. It’s like billiards. You haven’t any control over what the tens die will end up reading, but it gives you a second chance. For example, suppose you’re rolling for low numbers and, further, suppose that high numbers – 90 or higher – are fumbles or are otherwise catastrophic. You roll the tens die, and it’s a nine. You roll quickly, and the ones die bumps into the tens die, overturning it without knocking it off the table. (This is one of the risks with this kind of maneuver.) It looks very natural and is difficult to detect.

It’s interesting to note that there’s a trade-off here between the chances of getting caught and the mean value of the roll. Suppose again that you’re rolling for low values. If you only reject a value of nine on the tens die, the mean value of the percentile roll is 45. But if you give the tens digit a bump any time it reads six, seven, eight, or nine, the mean value of the roll is 37.5. There’s also a point of no return: Rejecting a value of one or higher brings the mean back up to 45. (See Tables 1 and 2 for details.)

Since performing this manipulation involves a very definite risk – namely, getting caught – accepting a less satisfying mean might be a sensible sacrifice in order to perform the manipulation less often.

An amusing sidelight is that in some game systems, a double zero (00) is treated as 100, not as zero. Furthermore, a roll of 100 is, in these systems, the worst fumble you can roll. When using this system of cheating to get low numbers, the chances of rolling double zero is increased. An error here can be highly amusing.

Other tricks with dice include dropping the dice from a low height (with the faces you want pointing up) instead of rolling them, making one face of a die slightly sticky (a maneuver that is “tacky” in every sense of the word) so that it usually lands down to allow the opposite side to face up, and simply rolling the dice out of sight of everyone else and lying shamelessly about the results.

Computer fraud

What about other random-number generators? Many players have access to high-

Table 1

Rolling For Low Values From 0-99

Tens digit values kept	Tens digit values rejected	Mean values of roll
0	1-9	45
0-1	2-9	41.5
0-2	3-9	39
0-3	4-9	37.5
0-4	5-9	37
0-5	6-9	37.5
0-6	7-9	39
0-7	8-9	41.5
0-8	9	45
0-9	none	49.5

Table 2

**Rolling For High Values
From 0-99**

Tens digit values kept	Tens digit values rejected	Mean values of roll
0-9	none	49.5
1-9	0	54
2-9	0-1	57.5
3-9	0-2	60
4-9	0-3	61.5
5-9	0-4	62
6-9	0-5	61.5
7-9	0-6	60
8-9	0-7	57.5
9	0-8	54

tech gadgetry. For instance, when I am a player in Victory Games’ JAMES BOND 007 game, I’ve found that a hand-held computer is very convenient. (Resolving effects in this game involves multiplying two numbers, rolling percentile dice, then cross-indexing values on a table.) Since I programmed the computer myself, the opportunities for cheating are limitless.

Another interesting abuse of calculators and computers is simply to sit and “roll,” as if tinkering aimlessly with the machine, until a really nice value comes up. When next asked to make a roll, pretend to push the buttons, then display the result you’ve been holding.

Many electronic random-number generators like the Dragonbone gadgets display the result for a brief time, then blank out again. This is of use only to the lowest class of die-roll cheaters: the poker-faced liars. I have found no means short of complete rewiring that will let me alter the results given by a Dragonbone – but there are gamers who are capable of doing this rewiring.

Military measurements

Beyond cheating with the results of die rolls, there are other fun ways of having your way with reality. Sand-table miniatures players might be familiar with the cheater's definition of one inch. One inch is about this long:

plus about this much more:

and, in the heat of battle, perhaps an additional:

or so more.

When using a ruler or other movement gauge, remember that you can always add the length of the miniature's base to its movement. Just start a measurement from the base's front and end it from the back. If you get caught, ask the other player to reread the "charge bonus" rules which exist in many miniatures rules sets. (While he's reading, take the time to readjust the position of your troops. Some of the greatest generals in history won battles by stealing a march of the foeman.

Sand-table movement can be incredibly sloppy, and that's one of the legitimate faults of that system, as opposed to using discrete movement measurements involv-

ing hexes or squares. On the other hand, when using a hex map, what's an additional hex or two between friends? Fifteen, sixteen - it's all pretty much the same. And lines of sight are quite difficult to ascertain on a map board. It's amazing how well arrows fly around corners, through massed ranks of friendly troops, and deep into the enemy formation.

File forgery

Most role-playing games involve record keeping. Naturally, you should keep all records in pencil. Soft pencil is more easily erased than hard pencil. Keeping notes on scratch paper rather than on permanent character sheets is even more effective. Scratch paper, you see, is easily lost. As government officials have proven time and again, if the records are shredded, then no proof of wrongdoing can exist.

Furthermore, few referees are able to check every little detail of every character. ("My character has *always* had a dexterity of 17.") Who bothers to check encumbrance? Who bothers to record how many arrows have been fired?

But wait. . .

Cheating? Who'd do such a thing? Why would any of us go to such extravagant lengths in a game - a *game*, for pity's sake

- in which the object is to have fun?

Unfortunately, fun is a relative thing. People have the ability to be amazingly shortsighted. If a role-playing game lacks any possibility of character failure or death, it quickly devolves into forays through a "Monty Haul" gilded hole that also lacks excitement. If a game *does* have the possibility of character failure or death, then sooner or later characters will fail and will die. It's no fun to have a well-beloved character die.

The tug-of-war is between game balance and wish fulfillment. Not everyone has the maturity and discipline to see how necessary the risk of failure is for success to have any meaning.

I believe the same laws of shortsightedness govern most illegitimate endeavors. People commit crimes because they imagine themselves to be immune to capture. ("Other people get caught, but not me.") One of the things that police officers see over and over again is the expression of utter surprise and panic on the face of a young criminal who thought it could never happen to *him*. Airlines sometimes scamp on their maintenance expenses, because a quick profit outweighs a tragic accident that might not happen. People leave their seat belts unfastened because they wrongly feel they can avoid accidents and injury. Smoke detectors are generally not sold to the very people who need them most: careless people. (I'm reminded that I haven't checked the batteries on my home smoke detector in over six months. . .)

Cheating is a quick-gratification trip with consequences that far outweigh the transient pleasure of the moment. It's comparable to shoplifting, which is easily done but at moderate risk. But when the risk finally comes home, the final payoff is at a tragically high cost. The inescapable rules of game theory win once more. The result is seldom pleasant.

In a game, the only real risk is the alienation of your friends. But that, for me, is far too high a price to pay.



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by Spike Y. Jones

Cheating Made Even Easier

Of course, if you're going to cheat,
then do it right!

As everyone knows, winning is everything and all's fair in love and war games. The Dungeon Master and the other players will always try to keep you from the treasure and experience that rightfully belong to you because of your gaming brilliance. What can you do? Use your aforementioned brilliance to further yourself in the only avenue left open to you: Cheat for all you're worth. After all, if the other players had your brains, they'd be doing it, too. If the DM hasn't the smarts to prevent it, that proves that you're justified in taking what you can get away with.

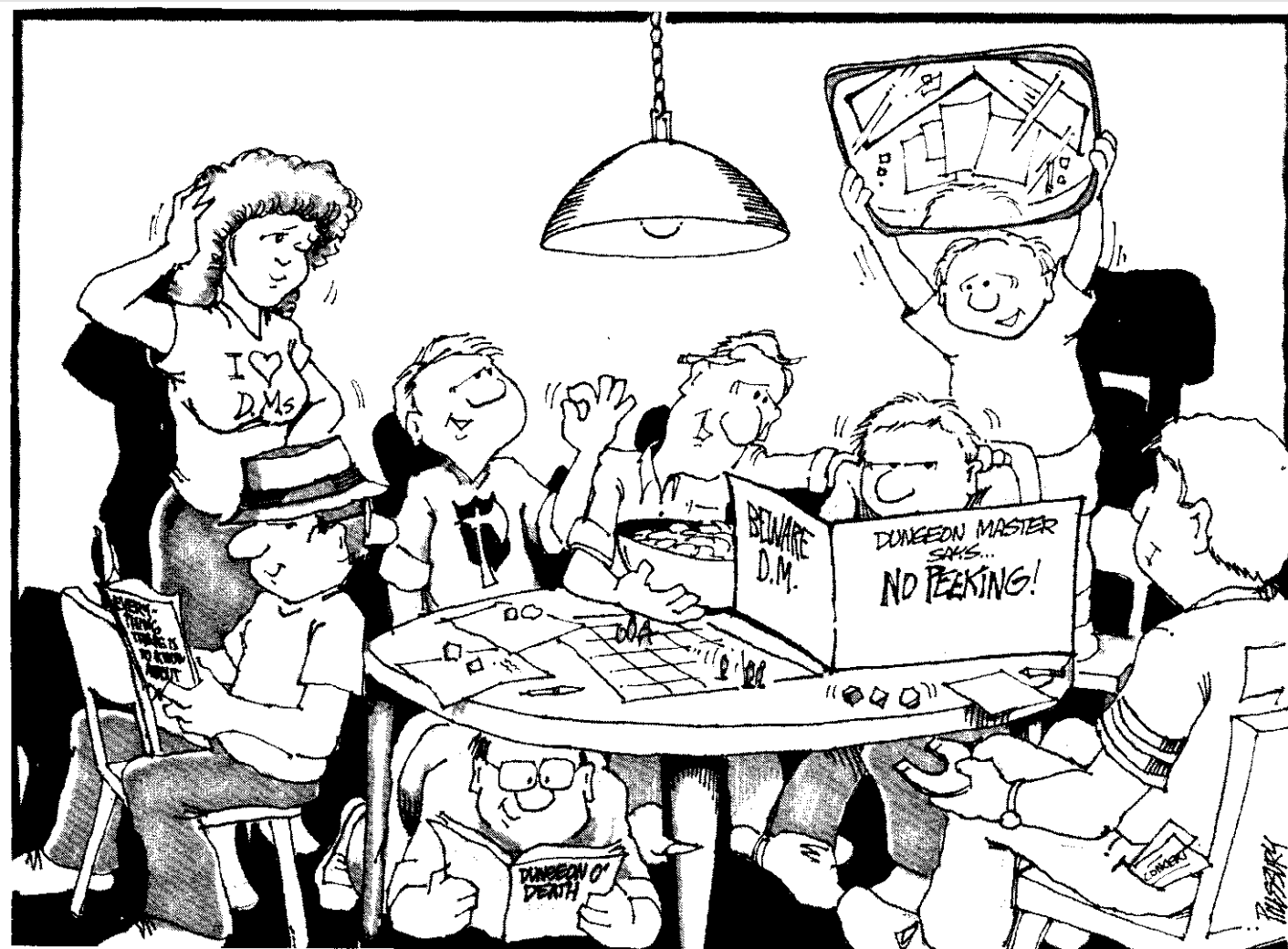


Illustration by Joseph Pittsburry

Although these suggestions were written for role-playing games, the methods described can be adapted for war, board, or card games with little difficulty for someone with your talents. Take #10, the Table-Leg Kick; it can accidentally happen during almost any type of game; but it takes only quick reflexes and a quicker mind to use this event to your advantage.

There are two classes of cheating tech-

niques: prepared cheats (which must be planned before gaming sessions) and unprepared cheats (which can be brought into play at any time). The first class requires forethought, research, and even a bit of money, but it doesn't require the same lightning reactions as the second class. All cheaters should honestly evaluate their resources and skills to decide which class of cheating they will use most.

Prepared Methods

■ 1. First, there's the old favorite of dice-shaving or weighting. Don't make it too obvious, though. A spherical die can only roll one number, but even a Dungeon Master isn't dumb enough to fall for this one very often.

■ 2. When buying new dice, test them with a few hundred rolls to see if they are naturally "loaded." If so, buy them immediately and record what number each one rolls most often (in secret code, of course). No matter what number each is keyed to, given time there is bound to be a situation when it will come in handy to roll a 9 on a 12-sided die or a 15 on a 20-sided die. In fact, a die that consistently rolls an 18 is often more useful than one that always rolls a 20, as the DM and other players are more likely to keep track of the number of times 20 is rolled than any other result.

■ 3. Try painting a few extra marks on your dice to turn each 1 into a 7, single digits into "teens," etc. This method works better with larger numbered dice. No one would be fooled by a 7 on a four-sided die, and the faces on an eight-sided die can easily be checked, but 20-sided and 30-sided dice are too big for easy inspection.

■ 4. Practice looking innocent as you say "No, I haven't read that module; I couldn't afford to buy it." Then buy all the modules ever produced and memorize them to the last word. Don't let your secretly acquired knowledge become too obvious, so that you "guess" every orc's hit points; save it for the big stuff. If you can't afford the modules on your own, you may want to trick friends and relatives into buying the modules for you (Christmas and your birthday roll by every year). Beg, borrow, and steal modules you can't afford. All will be forgiven if you win.

■ 5. Check out the DM's record collection, noting any music group whose albums appear more than three times. Watch for that group's next concert in your area, then buy a couple of tickets. At the last moment, come up with a conveniently forgotten prior engagement and give the tickets to the DM. The day after the con-

cert, the *staff of power* should be yours. ("Oh, by the way, Jack, thanks for the Springsteen tickets.") Hockey cards, baseball pennants, and the like can also suggest sports events for the same purposes.

■ 6. If concert tickets are too expensive for you, bringing chips and drinks to the games will win the favor of the DM. He won't be eager to upset you by killing off your favorite character if it might mean the end of his free junk food. The other players will also be willing to support you in an argument if they're living off your largess as well.

■ 7. Subscribe to as many gaming magazines and fanzines as possible, and record or remember every useful rule variant (preferable on microfilm or some other, easily concealed medium). Whenever any situation comes up that was covered by an article you read, mention the rules variant in an attempt to convince the DM that this new method will work much better than the old way. Of course, only mention variants that would be helpful to you. If he trusts your word on these variants, then make a few up; he'll never know the difference.

■ 8. Try to write articles for these magazines, too. Most DMs have sent their articles to a number of places but have yet to find success in their writing aspirations. Thus, they will have sympathy for anyone else trying to break into the field. If you do happen to get something printed, you will win their respect and the admiration of the other players in the group.

■ 9. Arrange for a friend to phone the DM once or twice during the game. In the few minutes he's occupied, you can memorize three average-size paragraphs or skim two pages. This is very useful if the DM writes his own adventures, eliminating the advantage you gained by buying modules. In fact, with the money you saved by not buying the modules, you can probably afford to buy an Instamatic camera to take quick-developing copies of the DM's key sheets. Those new, hand-held photocopiers can also be of use. A good cheater must keep up with the latest technology.

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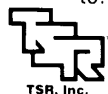
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Unprepared Methods

■10. Kick a table leg to topple figures, sneeze or breathe heavily at cards or counters, and spill your drink on game boards and maps marked with water-soluble ink. In games with extremely light playing pieces, telling a joke at an appropriate moment can easily cause gusts of laughter-produced wind to completely rearrange the game components. This allows you considerable leeway to reposition figures and counters or to redraw the spoiled maps. Don't try to get away with too much, as the other players may attempt to take advantage of this situation, too. The player making the most moderate changes will be the one least likely to suffer the DM's wrath if he notices the alterations.

■ 11. Lie about your character's saving throws, hit points, spells, skill levels, and so on. Try to keep your lies consistent, but don't worry much about it; the DM has hundreds of PCs and NPCs to keep track of, and he'll never remember what your character's dexterity really is.

■ 12. Write everything on your character sheet in light pencil. Not only can nobody read it, but it makes secret erasing and changing much easier. And while you're writing things on your character sheet, you might just forget to write down a few unimportant details, such as the fact that your character just lost 30 hp to a dragon's breath.

■ 13. Your character can carry anything at all with no encumbrance problems if nobody sees your character sheet. A few extra daggers, a coil of rope, even a second long sword in case your first one breaks – all of these things can be hidden in the unused corners of the page, on the back of the sheet, or even in the middle of the page if the items are written in lightly enough. ("Les, where did that alchemist on the mule come from?")

■14. Keep your character sheet in a clipboard with numerous other materials. If there is a lot of mundane paperwork in the clipboard, people are unlikely to look through everything to find the multiple character sheets you have hidden within, each one slightly different to deal with different situations.

■15. Sit as far from the DM as possible. This has numerous benefits to the cautious cheater. Most randomly encountered monster attacks and other unpleasantries will cause the people sitting closest to the DM to bother him as he concentrates. Thus, the DM will not notice you altering your character sheets, and he would never suspect you of peeking at the adventure (a well-placed mirror behind the DM can be very handy in this context).

■16. If you sit near the DM, try to convince him that mirrored sunglasses are the "in" thing to wear at games, even at indoor games. If he is hesitant, just buy him a pair of these glasses as a thank-you gift for all of the wonderful work he's done so far. In mirrors as small as these lenses, the only part of the DM's papers that are likely to be visible to you are the maps, but good cheaters can make a lot out of a little information.

■ 17. If the DM allows you to make your own "to hit" and damage rolls, develop the habit of rolling dice periodically, even when the rolls aren't required. If you end up with a good roll (remember rule #2 – a 17 could be better than a 20), leave the die lying there and point at it when a situation comes up that requires such a roll.

■ 18. If the DM uses chits or cards instead of dice, and he allows you to pick your own chit (an act which is illegal in 15 states; check local ordinances), mark the back or side of a chit having a good number with the edge of your fingernail. Make the mark small, but make sure it can be

felt with a fingertip so the next time you need that number, you can find it.

■ 19. If you happen to make a bad die roll, a simple distraction may allow you to make a second roll to replace the first one. Spilling a drink, knocking over an ashtray, or artfully exposing cleavage (if you have cleavage to expose) can distract many a DM.

■20. Always agree with the DM if he makes a mistake in your favor, but make no delay in pouncing on mistakes made against you. But remember to let mistakes stand that harm your fellow players. They're your enemies as much as the DM is.

■ 21. Better yet, butter up the DM by pointing out minor mistakes in your favor. Once he trusts your honesty, switch to method #11 (outright lying) and hope for the best. If you are cautious, ignore mistakes made in your favor but point out errors that affect the rest of the party.

■22. You can even challenge the DM when he makes a correct decision. Challenging the DM makes him lose self-confidence and he might make even more mistakes (and if he does, you can use method #20 or #21 as you see fit). If you can get three or four other players to agree with your complaint, the DM probably won't look up the problem in the rule book, hoping to save time and trouble.

■23. If the other players follow your example and start picking fights with the DM, take his side and try to keep the others in line. The hard-working DM needs all of the help he can get, and he'll look kindly on you for your assistance.

■ 24. Finally, if you catch someone else cheating (and he should be easy to spot for someone with your talents), immediately report him to the DM. DMs reward honest and helpful players like you.

Note to the DM

Place this article in a prominent location and secretly observe the result, using a peephole, mirrors, video camera, etc. Any player who reads more than halfway through this article is probably untrustworthy. Anyone who smiles to himself is guilty of something. Who wants people around who'd cheat at a game, anyway?

Earlier versions of this article appeared in *Sound & Fury* #3 and *Alarums & Excursions* #139. My thanks to the readership and editors for their comments, and my thanks, too, to my friends, whose ideas I stole.

Ω

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by Paul C. Easton



Claydonia Conquers the World!

More rules, powers,
tables, and trivia for
Clay-O-Rama fans

All is quiet on the battlefield as the two opponents take their places. Smoof, the gourd-shaped clay thing, looks malevolently at his opponent, the four-armed, six-legged, multi-colored monster called "Creepy" even by his mother. Creepy is the reigning Clay-O-Rama champion, having beaten 15 opponents and eaten 10 of them. Smoof is his next meal-er, opponent.

Creepy suddenly moves forward and shoots three square orange things at Smoof; two of them hit. The angry Smoof propels himself at the monster, but Creepy bites Smoof and hits him twice. Wounded, Smoof teleports himself to the opposite side of the game area. Creepy lets out an evil laugh and teleports next to Smoof. "Too bad, sucker!" hisses Creepy as he kills Smoof and proceeds to add him to his body. Sated, Creepy shouts in triumph—but is destroyed by an angry art teacher.





the world of Clay-O-Rama in DRAGON® issue #125, I immediately went out and bought half a dozen cans of Kenner's PLAYDOH® Modeling Compound. Some demented friends of mine came over, and we threw colored clay at one another. I was immediately hooked. I loved this new pastime but felt that something was missing from the game. After eating a cheese cake, drinking two liters of Cherry 7-Up, and watching Sesame Street reruns, I came to the following conclusions: one, there is no black PLAY-DOH compound; and two, being a lover of the AD&D® game, I was disappointed to find that the Clay-O-Rama rules offered no way to

thing was great, except for the additional amount of clay stuck in my hair and the fact that my favorite Claydonian was baked to a crisp by someone who failed to see the humor in my using three-inch steelies as Claydonian ammo. As the days went on, I added more powers to the list. This is how my Claydonian saga began.

Campaign rules

Players who win Clay-O-Rama game sessions may wish to keep their Claydonians and use them in future game ses-

titles, and additional benefits. The level number corresponds to the number of powers a Claydonian has. All Claydonians begin at first level with one power. As they defeat enemies (i.e., anyone they can flatten), they rise in level and gain more hit points. The hit points are cumulative (unlike powers); thus, by fifth level, a Claydonian would have 65 hit points add-



advance your Claydonians or conduct ongoing campaigns.

Consequently, I was motivated to write additional rules for the game, for my friends and my own personal use. Every-

sions. A long-lived Claydonian deserves some reward for surviving these silly battles. The campaign rules additions are explained as follows:

Experience level: This is just a power ranking created to satisfy a Claydonian's ego. Table 1 provides level numbers, level

ed to its original score. By sixth level, the Claydonian has become too powerful to be fun and it ceases to enjoy life, thus dying of "old age" (or drying out, whichever comes first). Of course, in your campaign Claydonians may be immortal. I'll leave it up to you, but I wouldn't worry about it anyway. I've never had a Claydonian live to see third level, much less sixth.

Table 1

Claydonian Level Advancement

Number of enemies destroyed or defeated	Experience level	Title	Benefits
0-5	1	Silly Thing	1 power
6-15	2	Weirdo	2 powers, +5 hit points
16-30	3	Freak	3 powers, + 10 hit points
31-50	4	Kook	4 powers, +20 hit points
51-80	5	Blob Monster	5 powers, + 30 hit points
81	6	Supreme Slime	Claydonian dies of old age

Table 2

Teleport Direction

1d6 roll	Direction
1-2	North
3	West
4-5	South
6	East

Taking the same power twice: If a player opts to take the same power twice, the effects of that power are doubled. For example, if a Claydonian takes Regeneration twice, its regains 2-12 instead of 1-6 hit points each turn. A Claydonian with Absorb Opponent taken twice cuts the "to hit" number it needs by half (round fractions up) when applying this power. Claydonians can also triple their powers, but this may make such Claydonians unfair opponents when certain powers are thrice increased.

Regaining lost hit points: During a game session, a Claydonian cannot regain lost hit points without the power of Regeneration. At the end of the game, however, the surviving Claydonian (or Claydonians, if you're playing in teams) regains all lost hit points, and all sustained damage is repaired.

regain all lost missiles at the end of a game and can take all of the losers' missiles, too.

Reshaping: At the end of a game session, a Claydonian can be reshaped with the following restrictions:

1. No new missiles may be made.
2. Missiles may not be added to body mass.
3. The number of limbs used for attacking may not exceed four.
4. The Claydonian's powers may not be changed.

Death: When a Claydonian reaches sixth level or is defeated (i.e., killed), it is "recycled" by the gods. If a Claydonian dries up, it is dead. Favored Claydonians should be lovingly zip-locked in a damp bag, kept cool, and guarded carefully. Enemies have been known to microwave their opponents for revenge; in extreme cases, angry opponents have been known to use various torture machines, such as the PLAY-DOH Barber Shop and the PLAY-DOH Fire Engine. If consumed by a dog or small child (PLAY-DOH is nontoxic), a Claydonian is considered dead. Note that dried Claydonians may sometimes be revived by adding water, if rescued in time.

"No referee" rules: To eliminate a referee from the gaming environment, Clay-O-Rama players may lock him out of the room. There is, however, an easier way: Simply have *everyone* play a Claydonian.

players not involved in the dispute make the final decision. Another system is to have a referee who plays and referees at the same time. This referee makes all decisions on damage and such except when his Claydonian is involved (players not involved in the disagreement make the decision in this instance). In a two-player game, problems are resolved by smacking the other person's Claydonian before he can get to yours.

Silly Putty: This is a new type of material for creating Claydonians. No one knows for certain where this strange material came from. Some say it is a gift left by an extraterrestrial intelligence, and some say it came from across the rainbow. I say it's radioactive jelly. One thing is for sure: Silly Putty makes nifty Claydonians and adds a new dimension to Clay-O-Rama battles. Although it doesn't come in the pretty colors that PLAY-DOH compound does, with Silly Putty, you can put the face of your favorite cartoon character on your Claydonian. But don't let your fun turn into a political argument, as once happened when a player put Ronald Reagan on his Silly Putty creature and said that he couldn't be defeated because he was President (the problem was settled when someone threw the Putty Reagan down the garbage disposal). You should note, however, that Silly Putty doesn't mix well with clay or PLAY-DOH compound. As a result, clay characters with the Absorb Opponent or Absorb Missile powers may have trouble absorbing Silly Putty.

A sticky situation: What do you do if a missile or other object sticks onto a Claydonian? Well, you pry it off, of course. Note, however, that the Claydonian then takes damage amounting to half the total caused by the object (e.g., a missile hits a Claydonian for 4 hit points of damage and sticks; the Claydonian takes an additional 2 hit points of damage while taking it off). If two Claydonians get stuck together, they each take 1-6 hit points of damage when separating from each other. In all instances, round damage down to the nearest integer.

Honoring a Claydonian death: Another advantage of clay characters is that when they die, you just dry them out and - voila! - you have a nice statue to use as a memorial, centerpiece, or clay pigeon.

Power, power, and more power

The following list of powers has been created to add more red peppers to the spice of the game.

1. **Missile Absorption:** When hit by a missile, a Claydonian with this power rolls 2d6 and compares the result to its "to hit" number. If the result is over the "to hit" number, the Claydonian takes no damage from the missile and may add the projectile to its body mass. For each missile smaller than marble-size absorbed, add 1 hit point to the Claydonian. Add 2 hit points for each marble-size missile absorbed, 3 hit points for any missile up to

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golf ball size absorbed, and 4 hit points for anything over golf ball size. This power does *not* allow a Claydonian to absorb the following: an opponent, a poke, a Blob of Death, or any object larger than fist size. In addition, absorbed missiles may not be used to create other missiles – they just add to the bulk of a Claydonian.

If the Claydonian does not make its “to hit” roll, it takes half damage (round fractions down) from the missile and does not absorb it. Note that a Claydonian may not absorb missiles that it throws at itself, and it takes full damage from a missile if it does so.

2. *Absorb Opponent*: This power gives a Claydonian the ability to absorb any other Claydonian it kills. When a Claydonian with this power kills an opponent, it makes a “to hit” roll. If successful, the Claydonian adds the dead opponent to its body bulk, adding the number of hit points that the old opponent had to its own. If unsuccessful, the dead Claydonian goes screaming up to the Great Hand in the Sky.

3. *Regenerate*: A Claydonian with this ability regenerates 1-6 hit points of damage per turn. This ability allows the Claydonian to replace lost hit points only; it does not create new ones.

4. *Drain Power*: A Claydonian with this power may drain one power from another Claydonian for six turns. Using this power takes the place of three attacks. To drain a power, the player must choose an opponent adjacent to his own Claydonian and make a successful “to hit” roll. If unsuccessful, the power is wasted. This power may be used once every five turns.

5. *Create Limb*: A Claydonian with this power may create a temporary limb. This temporary limb may replace one normal attack for a small- to normal-size limb; it may replace two normal attacks for a large-size limb; and (how could you guess?) it may replace three normal attacks for a very-large-size limb. This temporary limb lasts for four turns, and it hits and does damage according to its size. So, if your Claydonian already has four limbs, it could have five normal attacks per turn by adding a temporary limb!

6. *Repel*: This power may be used by a desperate Claydonian in place of all attacks. No “to hit” roll is needed, and the results are immediate. When this power is used, all opponents must move their maximum movement ranges *away* from the user for one turn. Moreover, the powers Teleport, Change Places, and Move Out of Turn cannot be used by opponents for one turn. In addition, the user may not be hit by missiles for one turn. This power may be used every third turn.

7. *Endurance*: The Claydonian with this power takes only half damage from all attacks. Round all fractions down.

8. *Stomp*: This deadly attack may be used only once in a gaming session. In addition, the Claydonian using this power is unable to take *any* action for two turns

thereafter. The attacker chooses an opponent adjacent to him and rolls to hit. If a successful hit is made, the player takes one of his shoes (or boots, if he is lucky enough) and gives the opponent a good solid WHACK! with it. Damage should be determined by the amount of the opponent flattened (e.g., if half of the Claydonian is flattened, it loses half of its hit points). Totally flattened Claydonians are left with only 1 hit point. More than one Claydonian may be affected by this mode of attack, including the attacking Claydonian. If the attacker somehow misses, it still suffers the exhaustive effects of the blow. Smart players will wear mountain boots, moon boots, or track shoes for this attack. Snow shoes or skis are not allowed.

9. *Toss*: A Claydonian with the Toss ability may use this power in place of all attacks. The attacker chooses an adjacent Claydonian and rolls the “to hit” dice. If successful, the player picks up the opponent’s Claydonian and tosses it no farther than the gaming area. If the opponent is tossed off or out of the gaming area, it may reshape itself, regain all lost hit points, and reappear in the gaming area anywhere it chooses (except on another Claydonian). The number of hit points lost must be determined by the referee or by players not involved in the attack. This number depends on the amount of structural damage sustained (about 10-20 hit points is appropriate). Tossing an opponent at the ceiling is legal as long as the opponent lands in the game area. If the opponent is tossed against the ceiling and hits the game surface, 20-30 hit points of damage are taken. If the opponent sticks to the ceiling, the Claydonian is out of the game until it falls. If it never falls and dries up instead, consider it dead. As a final note on this attack, if a tossed Claydonian hits another Claydonian, only the tossed Claydonian takes damage.

10. *Catch*: When something is thrown at a Claydonian with this power, the Claydonian makes a “to hit” roll. If successful, the Claydonian catches the item thrown at it. If the item happens to be a missile, the Claydonian catching it can reuse the missile. If the thrown object is another Claydonian, the target Claydonian catches it and takes no damage. If the Claydonian is unsuccessful in its “to hit” roll, it takes full damage from the missile.

11. *Teleport*: A Claydonian can use this power in place of all its missile attacks. The Claydonian with this ability can reappear anywhere on the game surface and, if possible, attack right away. To Teleport, the player must specify any vacant spot on the game surface that he wants his Claydonian to occupy. The player then rolls the “to hit” dice. If unsuccessful, the player must then roll 1d6 twice. The first die roll determines the direction in which the Claydonian teleported (reference this number on Table 2). The second die roll determines the distance in number of hands that the Claydonian moves.

12. *Use Self As Missile*: This power allows a player to throw his Claydonian in the same way one would throw a missile. The referee or players not involved in the attack assess the damage taken by both the missile and the target.

13. *Trade*: In a desperate situation, a Claydonian with this power can choose an opponent in an adjacent area and make a “to hit” roll. If successful, the player trades his Claydonian for the target Claydonian. This power may only be used once per game in place of all attacks for that turn. The player plays the new Claydonian with its shape, hit points, attacks, and movement, but retains his former Claydonian’s powers. Likewise, the other player retains his former Claydonian’s powers, but is now stuck with your Claydonian’s body.

14. *Speed*: A Claydonian with this power can double its movement for one turn in place of an attack.

15. *Paralyze*: On a successful “to hit” roll, a Claydonian can cause an adjacent opponent to stop moving and attacking for two rounds. This attack takes the place of all normal attacks. The paralyzed Claydonian cannot initiate *any* action for two rounds. This power may be used every three turns.

These additional rules are intended to get you started. Feel free to change them as you deem necessary. As a final note, there is nothing to stop you from making up your own powers; play with the rules that work best for you. Ω

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by John M. Maxstadt
(with inadequate apologies to Ed Greenwood)

Still More Outrages From the Mages

Dimwitted dweomers from the Misbegotten Realms

"It must not be supposed that all the mages of old were wise, clever, or even mentally competent," said Elkwhisker, smugly employing his endearing device of making irrelevant statements out of the blue to pique my interest. I was frankly more interested in my madeira, so I left him hanging. Lately, it's been everything from Halloween masks to pet rocks with the old boy.

He chafed for a while, then resumed all by himself. "I can sense your eagerness from the look of open-mouthed fascination on your face—"

"That's a yawn," I said quickly, but not quickly enough.

"—so I will not keep you in suspense. Nimrod of Nump, known far and wide as the greatest schlemiel in the Realms, had some glimmerings of magical talent, however mismanaged and poorly applied. History recounts some of the more spectacular blunders of this idiot savant in his lair in the Verdant Forest, subsequently-known as the Verdant Desert. However, it is not generally known that he was a prolific inventor of many new spells.

"His spells were actually created by mistake, which might also be fairly said of Nimrod's entire career, not to mention the magicker himself. He had developed what he proudly called the *cylindrical scroll*,

joined at both ends in a mystical way so that the joint disappeared into a continuous band of parchment. One side effect of this novelty was that the spells inscribed thereupon were inscribed permanently, never to disappear no matter how many times they are read aloud or copied into a spell book. A less-salutary side effect was that the words in the names of each of the spells were forced out of synchrony, so that the last words of each spell name appeared following the first words of the next, with correspondingly disastrous effects on the spells themselves.

"Several of these cylindrical scrolls still roll about on the floors of many a dungeon in the Realms, and not a few unfortunate dungeon explorers have copied these spells into their spell books or cast them directly from the scrolls. As descriptions of the spells' effects do not appear on the scrolls with the spell names and incantations, the poor sods — er, souls — can be said to have been inadequately warned, although in many cases the names of the spells themselves might have given pause to the wary.

"After Nimrod's death (the direct result of his attempt to increase the power of the first-level spell *erase*), some of these scrolls became scattered among several bands of adventurers. The survivors voluntarily

brought these items together in a kind of quarantine. I myself found them in a dumpster behind the legendary House of Out, in the Kingdom of Slumdudgeon, and learned of the following dweomers."

I myself had nodded off about eight lines into the preceding. But my tape recorder was running the whole time, so I got all the details. After all, a buck is a buck.

Scroll the First (Bumfoozle's Bane)

Find Terrain (Examination/Indentation)

Level: 1 Components: V,S

Range: Touch CT: 2 segments

Duration: Instant. ST: None

AE: Personal

Explanation/Description: Casting this spell enables the magic-user to locate the terrain (i.e., the ground beneath his feet). The somatic component of this spell consists of falling flat on one's face to get a closer look, doing 1-4 hp damage.

Explosive Familiar (Demolition)

Level: 2 Components: V

Range: 1" CT: 2 segs.

Duration: Instant.* ST: None

AE: 2" radius

* Permanent for the familiar, of course.

Explanation/Description: When this spell is cast, the spell-caster's familiar explodes, doing 1-4 hp damage to all within the area of effect (note spell range) and doing rather more damage to the familiar. Special familiars (brownies, imps, quasits, etc.) explode for 2-5 hp damage and make a nicer noise.

Invisible Runes (Circumspection)

Level: 1 Components: V,S,M

Range: 0 CT: 1 turn/rune

Duration: Perm. ST: None

AE: 5 runes/lvl.

Explanation/Description: This spell enables a magic-user to inscribe runes that are completely undetectable to all forms of normal and magical inspection (including all those available to the caster himself). The runes have no other magical powers. This is an excellent way to create *really* secret documents or to simply kill an afternoon without accomplishing anything. Material components for this spell include at least one potion of invisibility (for the ink) and anything else the DM can sucker the player into wasting on an effect indistinguishable from that of writing with an empty pen.

Wizard's Stalker (Self-Destruction)

Level: 6 Components: V,S

Range: 1 inch CT: 1 round

Duration: Not long ST: None

AE: Special

Explanation/Description: By casting this spell, the magic-user summons a random Level X monster (beholder, vampire wizard, lich, etc.), which proceeds to stalk,

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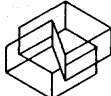
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with intent to kill, the nearest wizard (note spell level and range). The somatic component of this spell consists of putting one's hands over one's eyes. If by purest chance the spell-caster survives this spell, no experience points are gained (casting this spell was stupid to begin with).

Bigby's Interposing Eye (Astigmatic)

Level: 2 Components: V,S,M
Range: 2" CT: 5 rounds

Duration: 2 rnds./lvl. ST: None

AE: *Special*

Explanation/Description: Casting this spell causes a disembodied and sightless human eye, of normal size, to interpose itself between the spell-caster and any attacking creature. This eye is as effective as any normal eyeball in impeding onrushing and enraged monsters, although it might deter the more squeamish dungeon denizens. The material component for this spell is a human eye, and the magic-user had better have one handy before casting the spell; the ability of this dweomer to "improvise" can be attested by Mooncalf the Monocular, among others.

Remove Hand (Amputation)

Level: 4 Components: V,S
Range: 0 CT: 1 segment

Duration: *Perm.* ST: None

AE: *Personal*

Explanation/Description: When this

spell is cast, one of the magic-user's hands (determine which randomly) drops off at the wrist. One drawback of this spell is the fact that the effect is not painless. Also note the spell duration and the fact that the spell is not reversible.

Audible Curse (Vociferation)

Level: 2 Components: V

Range: 0 CT: 1 segment

Duration: *Instant.* ST: None

AE: 10 miles

Explanation/Description: This spell allows the caster to pronounce his or her favorite four-letter word with feeling and at maximum volume. It is up to the DM to prevent characters from exercising this option without casting the spell, which will at least increase the range at which the word will be heard (drawing any number of interested wandering monsters, of course).

Hallucinatory Glamer (Affectation/Ostentation)

Level: 3 Components: V,S,M

Range: *Touch* CT: 1 round

Duration: 2-12 days ST: *Neg.*

AE: *Creature touched*

Explanation/Description: The recipient of this spell will seem, to those with low intelligence or less, to be a person of great wealth and notoriety. The exact effects vary with the level of the caster. At highest

levels, the recipient may appear to be a female entertainer who turns over cards bearing glowing runes and points at treasure, or a black-and-white terrier who party-hops with his entourage of coquettes; at lower levels, the recipient becomes either the overly made-up wife of a disgraced high priest or a Democratic presidential candidate. Monsters typically react to this dweomer by pestering the recipient for autographs, kidnapping him or her for ransom, or writing nasty things about the recipient for local tabloids. The material components for this spell include a fake fur, a string of rhinestones, and a bottle of Grecian Formula.

Scroll the Second **(Odod's Oracle)**

Burning Mouth (Conflagration)

Level: 1 Components: V,S,M

Range: 0 CT: 1 segment

Duration: *Instant.* ST: None

AE: *All creatures within range (i.e., the caster)*

Explanation/Description: Similar in some ways to *burning hands*, this spell causes 1 hp of heat or fire damage per level of the caster, with the above limitations on range and area of effect. The material components for this spell are six jalapeno peppers, which must be eaten as the spell is cast.

Locate Hands (Confirmation)

Level: 2 Components: V,S

Range: 2'/lvl. CT: 2 rounds

Duration: 1 rnd./lvl. ST: None

AE: *Special*

Explanation/Description: Casting this spell enables the magic-user to find his own hands, even in the dark. Ordinarily, he will find them at the ends of his arms (one each), unless *remove hand* has been previously cast. In the latter case, this spell could be quite useful; however, it has a limited range and an extensive somatic component, either of which might compromise its effectiveness in finding detached hands.

Detect Object (Cerebration)

Level: 1 Components: V,S,M

Range: 0 CT: 3 segments

Duration: *Special* ST: None

AE: 1" radius/lvl.

Explanation/Description: By means of this spell, the magic-user can detect the presence of one or more objects within the area of effect. The spell does not disclose the size, nature, or number of these objects. It lasts as long as the magic-user continues to concentrate. The material component for this spell is any object of convenient size, which must be held just above the tip of the spell-caster's nose throughout the duration of the spell.

I'M THE NO-SASE OGRE.



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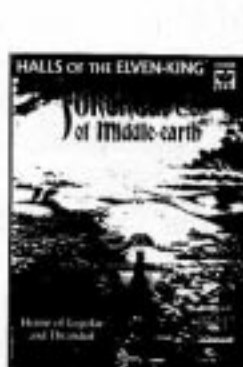
its borders constantly patrolled by the silent elves, bow-armed and vigilant.

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Feign Invisibility (Delusion)

Level: 1 Components: V,S,M
 Range: 0 CT: 1 round
 Duration: *Special* ST: *Neg.*
 AE: *Personal*

Explanation/Description: Casting this spell enables the magic-user to put on a really good act of being invisible. Monsters that see the spell-caster must save vs. spells; those who fail their saves are convinced that the spell-caster is in fact invisible – but that they, for some reason, are now able to see invisible creatures. The effect lasts as long as the magic-user concentrates – usually only for a short while, after which the magic-user becomes apparent again. The material component for this spell is an ostrich feather.

Drawmij's Instant Death

(Extermination)
 Level: 8 Components: V
 Range: *Infinite* CT: 8 segments
 Duration: *Instant.* ST: *None*
 AE: *Special*

Explanation/Description: When this spell is cast, Drawmij, wherever he is and whoever he is, dies. He dies immediately, without even a saving throw. As this spell has been around for some time, it is safe to assume that Drawmij is getting pretty sick and tired of it.

Magic Summons (Arraignment/Charge)

Level: 4 Components: V,S
 Range: *Special* CT: 4 rounds
 Duration: *Special* ST: *None*
 AE: *Special*

Explanation/Description: This spell calls into existence an extradimensional process-server, who hands the spell-caster a summons (for any random offense – possibly the murder of one Drawmij) and vanishes. If a fine of 500 gp is not paid immediately, the magic-user is *teleported* to an extremely strange alternate plane of existence known as night court, where he risks being sentenced to *imprisonment* (as per the spell) for 1-100 years.

Scroll the Third
(Goophus's Grimoire)**Speak With Mud** (Elocution)

Level: 1 Components: V,S
 Range: 1"/lvl. CT: 1 segment
 Duration: *Special* ST: *None*
 AE: 1" rad./lvl.

Explanation/Description: This spell enables the magic-user to converse with normal, nonmagical mud. The mud hears everything the magic-user says and can answer audibly. Unfortunately, this spell does not endow the mud with any other magical powers (such as intelligence), so its answers are generally restricted to unedifying glugs and gurgles. The spell duration continues until the magic-user gets sick of the whole thing or shouts himself hoarse in frustration.

Charm Dead (Net-Romantic)

Level: 2 Components: V,M
 Range: 12" CT: 2 segments
 Duration: *Hard to tell* ST: *None*
 AE: 1 corpse/lvl.

Explanation/Description: This spell causes the spell-caster to affect the dead as if he had an 18 charisma – oh, what the heck – as if he had a 25 charisma! Either way, the effect is the same (*exactly* the same) on dead characters, monsters, animals, and even plants. This spell does not affect the un-dead, nor does it work in conjunction with *animate dead* or *speak with dead*, nor does it serve any other useful purpose. The material component for this spell is a drop of *eau de boneyard* behind each ear.

Water Plant (Precipitation/Inundation)

Level: 7 Components: V,S,M
 Range: 1" CT: 7 rounds
 Duration: *Special* ST: *None*
 AE: 1 small plant

Explanation/Description: Casting this spell calls into existence an extradimensional watering can, which functions as a conduit between the Prime Material plane and the plane of elemental Water. Water flows through the can onto a plant at a rate of one pint per segment per level of the caster (so high-level spell-casters are getting into trouble already). As it happens, Nimrod never got around to formulating the incantation to dismiss the watering can or to stop the flow of water, and no power short of a *wish* can divert the spout of the can from the plant it was summoned to water. The material component for this spell is one small potted plant, preferably one of little value to the caster.

Stone Breathing (Suffocation)

Level: 6 Components: V,S
 Range: 0 CT: 6 segments
 Duration: 1 turn/lvl. ST: *None*
 AE: *Personal*

Explanation/Description: This spell endows the spell-caster with the ability to breathe solid stone. Unfortunately, it also deprives him of the ability to breathe anything else for the duration of the spell. As a result, the spell-caster is likely to be in trouble unless he casts the spell while encased in solid stone (note, however, that the spell has an extensive somatic component). It is also possible for the spell-caster to survive the duration of the spell by sucking on a pebble. However, if this continues for more turns than the caster has points of constitution, he becomes befuddled and disoriented (a condition technically referred to as becoming "stoned").

Affect Shape (Starvation)

Level: 5 Components: S
 Range: 0 CT: *None*
 Duration: 1 wk./lvl. ST: *None*
 AE: *Personal*

Explanation/Description: Throughout

the duration of this spell, the magic-user loses 2 lbs. per day (which can be dangerous, especially for elven wizards). However, when the spell duration is finished, the magic-user gorges himself nonstop until he has gained back twice as much weight as he lost, none of which can be lost by any means short of a *wish*.

Detect Normal Fires (Immolation)

Level: 1 Components: V,S
 Range: *Touch* CT: 1 second
 Duration: *Special* ST: *None*
 AE: *One fire*

Explanation/Description: Casting this spell enables the magic-user to detect the presence of normal (nonmagical) fire (note the spell range). The somatic component for this spell is to cover the eyes, turn the head, and thrust out either hand. If both hands are full, another bodily member may be substituted at the DM's option. The verbal component (which follows the somatic) is similar to that in *audible curse*. The effect of this spell is considerably enhanced by coating the hand with lantern oil prior to casting; a helpful DM will no doubt suggest this.

Wall of Evil (Profanation)

Level: 4 Components: V,S
 Range: 3" CT: 4 segments
 Duration: 1 turn + 1 rnd./lvl. ST: *Neg.*
 AE: *Special*

Explanation/Description: This spell creates a vertical wall of sheer diabolical (or demoniacal) evil, 10' square per level of the spell-caster. Paladins and other minions of good who pass through this wall must save vs. spells or feel distinctly unwelcome. Aside from the fact that no undead or creatures from the lower planes can be turned by clerics separated from them by this spell, this dweomer has no other function.

Transmute Rock to Stone

(Redesignation) Reversible

Level: 7 Components: V,S
 Range: 1"/lvl. CT: 7 rounds
 Duration: *Perm.* ST: *None*
 AE: *Special*

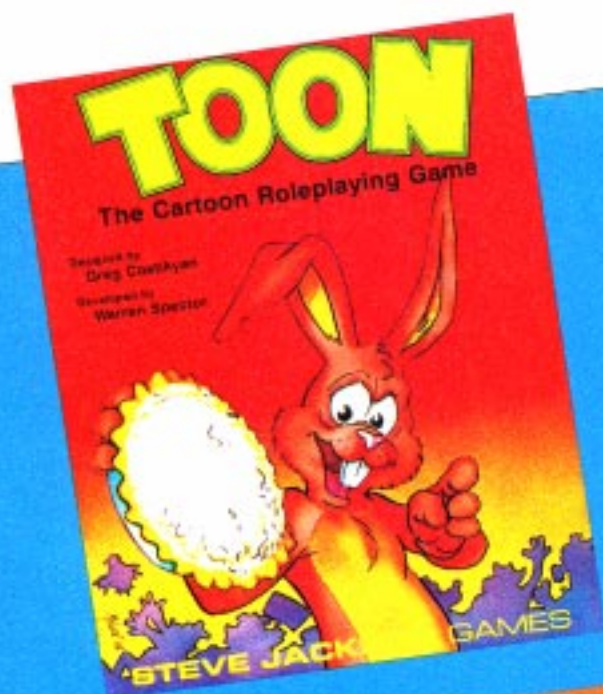
Explanation/Description: This powerful magic enables the spell-caster to turn *any* amount of nonmagical rock into stone. The casting time does not include the time it takes to determine whether or not the spell has taken effect, which can be considerable. The somatic component for this spell requires that the spell-caster pull his index finger out of his mouth so that his cheek makes a popping sound, then rotate the finger vertically in the air while whistling a low glissando.

Continued on page 79

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Role-playing *Reviews*

Playing in a lighter vein

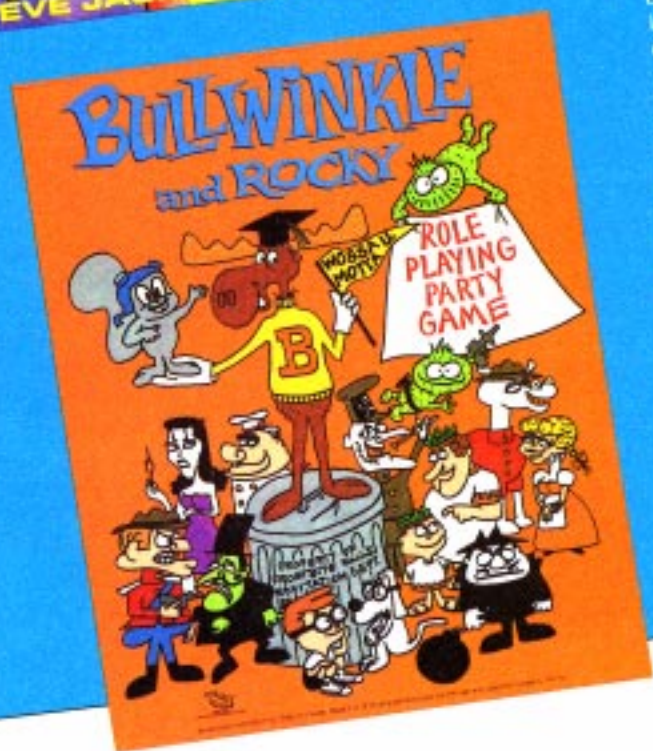


This month, let's start off by talking about death, the ultimate penalty for screwing up in role-playing games. Your characters have faced death lots of times, whether from bad die rolls, wrong decisions, or just being in the wrong place at the wrong time. If you're lucky, someone will bring your dead characters back with raise dead spells or high-tech rejuvenators. In really bad cases, your characters may be animated by despicable fiends and end up as zombies, or perhaps be level-drained and be turned into wights or something far worse. Most of the time, decent burials are all you can expect, then you have to generate new characters.

It's the thrill of knowing that each character has some chance of survival that keeps you coming back for more. You do your utmost to plan carefully and ensure that your side emerges victorious. When things are really bad, running away is often the only recourse you have. You've invested many hours into developing your character, so you're not going to squander that work needlessly.

But if you take away the fear of death, you can throw careful planning away, too. If your character can't die, you can have him attempt all kinds of off-the-wall stunts. Your character can be squashed by huge boulders, run over by speeding locomotives, or have bombs go off in his face, but he'll still walk away (or waddle away if he's squashed flat).

In most role-playing games, you're soon going to get bored by this situation. But what if you're playing a cartoon character? Nobody expects those cute and charming creatures to be seriously injured. They always pop up after some disaster, ready to go again and no worse for the wear. Playing a cartoon character allows you to get away with almost anything: the wackier the stunt, the better. You're playing for fun, free from the spectre of death, so enjoy yourself.



TOON® game

Steve Jackson Games, Inc. \$9.95
Design: Greg Costikyan
Development: Warren Spector
Illustrations: Kyle Miller
Components: 64-page book

The TOON role-playing game is hardly what you'd call new; after all, it was released in 1984. What's it doing here, then? Well, the TOON game is a classic — a game which deserves the attention of everyone looking for a dramatic change of pace and emphasis in their role-playing. While it may be old, it hasn't lost any of its charm and excitement in the last five years. When you consider the age of a lot of the cartoons which are still shown on television, the TOON game clocks in as a veritable youngster.

The TOON game is set in the realm of cartoon mayhem. In this freewheeling game, anything can happen and frequently does. Forget about planning your next move or considering the options. In the TOON game, you're advised to act before you think, put your brain out of gear, and rely on your sense of humor and instincts. If you have to think about something, then you're taking too long. Grab the situation and make of it what you can. Play is fast and furious to maximize on the fun and the silly situations. Don't worry about what is going to happen to your character — just get on with it!

The rules: To be able to pull off this kind of fast-flowing action, you need a flexible and easy-to-use rules system, or else you're going to get bogged down figuring out how the game works. The TOON game rules are very, very simple. All you need are a couple of six-sided dice. To start, you decide what type of character you want to play: pig, rabbit, duck, robot, human, trash can, or anything else your imagination can come up with. If you simply can't decide, you can roll on the nifty Species Table on page 17 of the book. Next, grab 1d6 and roll for your four attributes: Muscle, Zip, Smarts, and Chutzpah. If you'd rather allocate the scores yourself, you get 14 points to spread among these attributes. To determine hit points, roll 1d6 and add 6 to the result. Now decide what your character looks like, what its natural enemies are (if any), and what its beliefs and goals are (you can have as many of these as you want; they help define your character's outlook and indicate how it should react in certain circumstances).

To make sure your character is better at some things than others, you select skills. There are 23 skills from which to choose, and you have 30 skill points to spend on them. All of the skills are based on your character's attributes. By spending skill points, you can raise skill levels to a maximum of 9. For example, Tom the Cat has a Muscle of 4, but he wants to be good at climbing, so he spends 5 skill points to increase his Climb skill (based on Muscle) to 9.

The skills cover all the things your character is likely to want to do. Muscle skills have to do with fighting, climbing, breaking down doors, and throwing things. Zip skills (a mixture of speed, alertness, dexterity, and coordination) lets the character dodge, drive vehicles, fire guns, run, ride, and swim. Smarts skills are geared to brain power; they help the character hide things, see things, track things, and resist the fast-talking spiel of another character. Finally, there are Chutzpah skills, which measure how pushy your character is. These skills let your character fast-talk others into doing things which are really dumb or dangerous, pass or detect shoddy goods, sneak around, and perform actions based on sleight of hand.

To use a skill, you roll 2d6 and hope to get your skill number or less. If your character is fighting another character, the other player rolls as well. If you both succeed or both fail, nothing happens; if one succeeds and the other fails, the winner hits his opponent. It's pretty simple. Chuck in a few special things like shitsicks, amazing special powers (including hypnosis, incredible luck, teleportation, or being able to change shape), and some personal items, and the fun's ready to start.

But you can start even earlier than this if you want. In fact, by page 12 you can participate in your first cartoon. The TOON game is designed for fast action and fun, and the rules are presented in the same way. The book quickly introduces you to the basics of role-playing and to the minimum number of rules you need to play the first adventure. Pregenerated characters are provided specifically for this adventure, in which the characters compete in "The Cartoon Olympics." Once you've completed this adventure, you can then create a full-fledged character for use in the other adventures.

The world of TOON adventures: Forget about natural laws. In the TOON game, the real world only impinges if your character is too smart for his own good. He can breath underwater or walk on air over gaping chasms with no problems, provided that he's too dumb to realize otherwise. Any time your character is involved in an impossible situation, roll against his Smarts score. If you fail, great — he can carry on. But if you make the roll, he's in trouble! The realization that he should be drowning or plummeting to his death causes him to do just that. It pays to be dumb in the TOON game.

Death? Did I say "death"? I meant to say "fall down." Yep, whenever something really terrible happens to your character, he's in big trouble. Squashed, flattened, out of hit points, drowned, baked, fried, or sliced, they're all the same — he ends up falling down. That means you're out of the game for a full three minutes. Once that's up, your character is back in the game, right where he fell down (unless he's been moved by forces beyond his control).

The action in the TOON game takes

place in one of four basic locations: Anytown, Outside of Town, The City, and Outer Space. Where else would you want to go? Anytown has all the amenities of a town. If you want anything more, you head for The City. Outside of Town is any place that's not in Anytown or The City: the North Pole, Australia, the Stone Age, etc. And if you leave the Earth, naturally you end up in Outer Space.

The Animator: You may be wondering how you're going to cope with all these indestructible player characters rushing all over the place, creating mayhem and running totally out of control. Well, it's easy: You get to make all manner of funny noises, and no matter how zany the player characters are, you're always in charge. All you've got to remember is to be even zanier than the player characters, and everything will be fine.

And if all else fails, you can always fall back on the Fifty Percent Rule. This neat rule of thumb allows you to reduce any problem to a yes/no answer. Question: "Will it work?" Answer: "Yes/no." All you've got to do to arrive at the right answer is roll 1d6. If a 1-3 comes up, the answer is "yes." If a 4-6 comes up, the answer is "no." Pretty easy, huh?

Commentaries on the art of being an Animator provide plenty of tips and show how to put them into practice. As there are no complicated rules to puzzle over, all an Animator needs is the ability to think quickly. It also helps to have a good feel for slapstick humor.

The adventures: Three adventures besides "The Cartoon Olympics" are provided to get things moving. "I Foogled You" is a short adventure in which the characters head Out Of Town to Darkest Africa in search of the legendary Foogle Bird. "Spaced Out Saps" is set in Outer Space, and "The Better Housetrap" takes place in Anytown. All three adventures contain plenty of opportunities for cartoon mayhem and serve as ideal introductions to cartoon role-playing. These adventures are lots of fun. Once you've finished playing them, you'll be more than ready to either design your own or to rush out and pick up some more TOON material from Steve Jackson Games: *TOON Strikes Again*, *TOON Silly Stuff*, and *Son of Toon*.

Artwork: Artwork is spread liberally throughout the rule book. It does an excellent job of capturing the atmosphere of the game, and it's not just there to make the book look pretty; it actually illustrates many of the rules and shows you how everything works. Full marks are awarded here for graphic presentation.

Evaluation: The TOON game provides an excellent change of pace and a shift of emphasis away from the more serious role-playing games. I highly recommend it as an evening's entertainment and as a cure to role-playing blues. Buy a copy if you are in a silly mood or need to be cheered up. The TOON game and supplements are available from Steve Jackson Games, Inc., Box 18957, Austin TX 78760.

BULLWINKLE AND ROCKY™ Role-playing Party Game

TSR, Inc. \$15.00

Design: Dave "Zeb" Cook

Development and editing: Warren Spector

Art and graphic design: Sue Myers

Components: (Are you ready for, this?) A

16-page "How To Play the Game" booklet, a 16-page "Stories" booklet, a 32-page "The Guide to Frostbite Falls and Beyond" booklet, 108 official story cards, six spinners, 18 character stand-ups, one Narrator's microphone, one blank character stand-up, two diplomas, and 10 hand puppets.

Welcome to the world of the new BULLWINKLE AND ROCKY game, stuffed full of nifty bits and pieces created to maximize an evening's fun. Designed in a cheap and cheerful way, this game lets players assume the roles of Bullwinkle the Moose, Rocky the Flying Squirrel, the Pottsylvania spies Boris Badenov and Natasha Fatale, Fearless Leader, Captain Peter Peachfuzz, the Moon Men Gidney and Cloyd, Dudley Do-Right, Horse, Inspector Fenwick, Nell Fenwick, Snidley Whiplash, and a whole bunch of other characters.

A quick glance at the components tells you that this is not a standard role-playing game. Instead, the whole package is set up to let the players tell their own versions of the cartoon shows. So, how does it work?

The BULLWINKLE AND ROCKY game is really three games in one. Let's start with the basic version: the Narration Game.

The Narration Game: To play this version, all you need are the 108 story cards. These are printed with various humorous pictures and captions telling you what they are. The idea is to tell a story using the cards. Each player is dealt a hand of cards (five cards if there are four or less players, four if there are five or more players). One player then takes the 16-page "Stories" booklet and selects a story to play. This can be either a Rocky and Bullwinkle story, a Dudley Do-Right story, or a story drawn from one of the other cartoons: Fractured Fairy Tales, Peabody's Improbable History, or Aesop and Son fables. The Rocky and Bullwinkle and the Dudley Do-Right stories each have a "story so far" section which describes events leading up to the start of the story; they also have an ending. The other cartoons are given in less detail, thus allowing players to set their own beginnings and objectives.

Once a story has been chosen and the ending told to the players, the game begins. The player who chose the story kicks off by playing a card from his hand and by adding a bit to the story based on the card. As the cards contain a wide range of events, characters, items, and other stuff, the story can progress in

strangely improbable ways. Fitting the card you play into the ongoing story line is where the fun comes in. If you can't think of a use for your card, you can discard it and as many other cards as you want, then draw new ones to replace them. The game continues with each player adding his bit to the story until each player only has one card left.

Now the players have to bring the story to its ending. To do so, the person who chose the story counts to three. Each player then throws his last card onto the table. If your card lands first, you get to tell the ending to the story. The more clever the pun and twist in the story line, the better. But what if you haven't got a suitable card to play? No sweat - you simply discard it and draw a new one. And if you have a really great ending, let the other players know by jumping out of your seat and waving your arms about!

Okay, the story is over. What now? You hand out diplomas for the best gag, funniest pun, best ending of the evening, or whatever else you feel like. Dump the two diplomas into a photocopier and run off as many you want. Admittedly, in this version of the game, the diplomas mean zilch, but they do add to the fun.

The Everybody Can Do Something Game: Once you've mastered the Narration Game, it's time to get technical and move onto the Everybody Can Do Some-

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TSR's *Commando*, released September 1988, provides the rules for fighting terrorism and *Brushfire Wars* provides the scenarios.

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The heat is blistering, sweat pours down your back as you sit in full armour on your trotting war horse. It's five hours after dawn and the enemy still hasn't appeared.

Then you hear faint chanting "Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar". Dust billows up and hangs in the still desert air.

Quite suddenly, over the ridge the armies of Saladin appear. rank upon rank, waves of colour, harsh reflections, armoured knights like yourself, horse archers even now wheeling and fitting arrows to bow strings, ranks of Nubian spearsmen advancing at the trot.

But for a few minutes you have them where you want them; downhill, off balance and unprepared.

Your commander, Gerard of Rideford, turns in his saddle.

"Ceuch lances, prepare to charge" His eye sweeps along the line. He raises his lance. "We fight for Christ!"

Your horse starts at a trot, breaks to canter, then a full gallop; foot soldiers are swept aside, mounted turks pulling desperately at their reins trying to face your charge, but it's too late as two hundred Hospitaller crusader knights crash into the Moslem army.

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thing Game. So far, it's just been a card game; now we get into the role-playing part. But this is role-playing with a difference. For starters, there's no GM. Sure, you have a Narrator, but everyone gets to be the Narrator. The Narrator's Microphone stand-up is passed around the table in the course of a game. The Narrator's job is to keep the story moving and to ask the other players what their characters are doing.

The basic set-up is the same as in the Narration Game, with a story being selected by one of the players and each player being dealt a hand of cards. Each player, including the player who starts as the Narrator, also gets a character to play. This is where the character stand-ups come in. These stand-ups have pictures of the characters on them and details of each character's powers. Each player also takes a spinner with the picture of their character on it. These are used as randomizers and are spun to see whether a character succeeds when carrying out an action. For example, Dudley Do-Right nearly always does things wrong. Any time he formulates a plan or is told by another player to do something, he spins the spinner to see if he does it successfully. The spinner is loaded against him, so Dudley often messes up. Dudley also can't do anything that has evil consequences. If convinced by another player to carry out an evil deed,

Dudley automatically gains some benefit from it. Throw in a few other bits of the provided characterization, and you've got a character ready to take part in full-blown cartoon adventures. To give the story some structure, there are goals for the good and bad guys, and some great ideas to try out in the course of the story.

The current Narrator reads out "The Story So Far" and asks one of the players to continue it from there. Players can use their powers by spinning their spinner thingies (if necessary) or play cards from their hands. Using a card to advance the story means you automatically succeed and don't have to spin your spinner. If you use your powers and get a bad spin, the Narrator decides what happens to your character by making it up or by playing a card.

After the current Narrator plays a card, the Narrator's microphone stand-up is passed to the player on the left, who now becomes the new Narrator. Once any player has only one card left, he may try to end the story, hopefully after completing the characters' goals. To see if you succeed, spin the spinner. If you get a "yes" result, great; if you get a "no," you draw one or more cards and the story continues.

This adds up to a very free-form game which is lots of fun to play and allows players to come out with some of the

worst story twists and puns imaginable. To further add to the excitement, you can use a glove puppet for your character (though not all of the characters have one provided). Wave the puppet around, make it talk, do what you want with it. In game terms, the puppet is totally useless, but who said everything has to have a purpose?

The diplomas are handed out just as in the Narration Game. In this version, however, once you've accumulated a few diplomas, you can use them to aid your character. If you cash in two, you get another attempt at spinning a spinner. Cashing in five lets you succeed at an action without having to spin the spinner.

The Graduate Game: Once you've mastered the other two games, you're ready for the Graduate Game. This game has guidelines for designing your own characters, drawing their pictures (the Rocky and Bullwinkle way), and making up your own stories. This is where the blank character stand-up comes in, and you get a few blank cards with which you can add your own designs to the game. The Graduate Game is really an extension of the Everybody Can Do Something Game, letting you do whatever you want with the game.

"The Guide to Frostbite Falls and Beyond": In this booklet, you find out about the characters and world setting, and you get some ideas of how you can use the cards in play. Nicely written and fun to read, the booklet is well illustrated (as are the other two booklets) and forms a useful sourcepack to the game.

Evaluation: There you have it, the BULLWINKLE AND ROCKY Roleplaying Party Game - fast, manic fun, guaranteed to liven up even the duller party (and with plenty of bits and pieces to play with, too). Treat it as a board game, rather than as a serious role-playing game, and you're in for a treat. It ain't art, but it's fun.

Short and sweet

PARANOIA™ Form Pack, by Steven Gilbert. West End Games, \$8.00. Hey, dude, looking for something special to make your PARANOIA game clones' lives miserable? Then look no further. The *PARANOIA Form Pack* contains 10 Form Request Forms, four Equipment/Weapon/Vehicle Request Forms, and a special Code 7 adventure, "Hole In The Complex." The forms are in triplicate and come complete with carbon paper.. Use them to catch the player characters out (PARANOIA-style) and to liven up existence in Alpha Complex. Proud owners of the *PARANOIA Excessory Pack* (see "Role-playing Reviews" in issue #132) will already possess copies of the Equipment/Weapon/Vehicle Request Forms, which limit the *PARANOIA Form Packs* effectiveness; still, spare forms always come in handy. The forms include delightful questions such as:

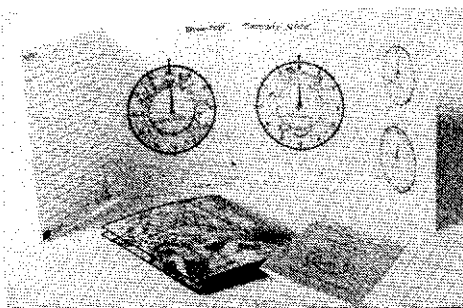
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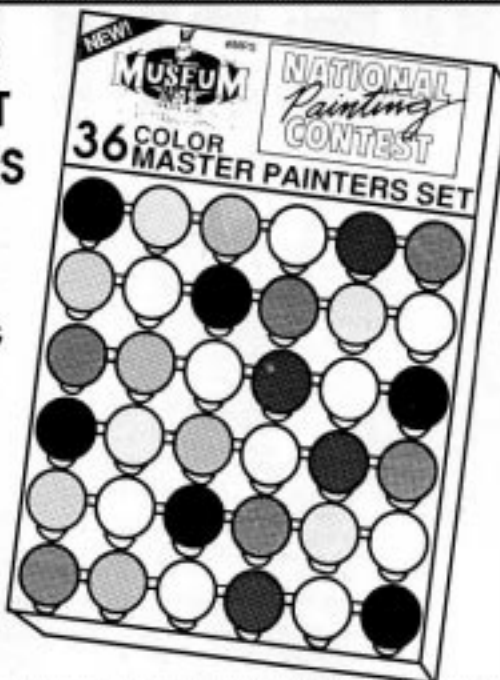
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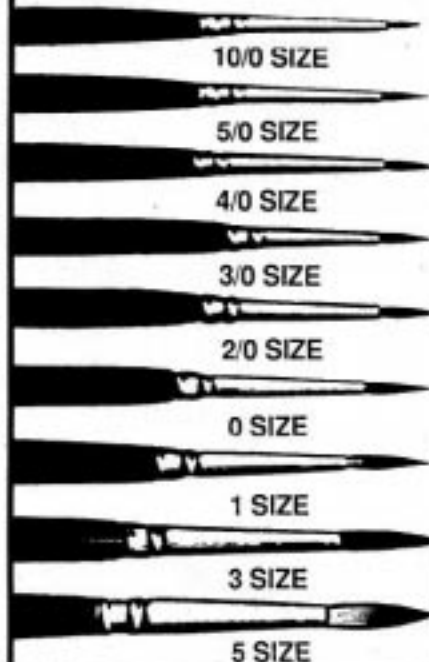
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If you answered yes, why is the threat worse now? Does this mean The Computer is an ineffective leader? Are you suggesting that you could do a better job than The Computer?

If you answered no, why? Do you feel The Computer is exaggerating the Commie Menace? Why would you think that?

The three-page adventure is designed to introduce new Red-clearance-level clones to the wonderful world of bureaucracy. It uses the forms to good effect and leaves you with plenty of spare ones for future adventures. If you like tongue-in-cheek props in your game, this pack is worth getting. If you're just looking for an adventure, save your money and buy something a bit more substantial. This product (and the following one) are available from: West End Games, RD 3 Box 2345, Honesdale PA 18431.

Don't Take Your Laser To Town, by Malcolm Mouvis and Vern G. Hargett. West End Games, \$8.00. Journey back to the days of the Old West to meet the Bot With No Name, Wyatt Earp, Doc Holliday, and a bunch of other western cliches hanging out in WST Sector of Alpha Complex. Join forces with the Dooke and put an end to the nefarious schemes of Black Bot. In this 32-page adventure, the bygone days of the Wild West get the PARANOIA game treatment. This fast-moving adventure fairly rips along, but at times it moves too fast for its own good, with staging and GM tips suffering slightly in the process. This is a fun supplement, but it lacks the unique charm which characterized earlier PARANOIA adventures. While not first-class, *Don't Take Your Laser To Town* will certainly keep your clones amused.

FR5 *The Savage Frontier*, by Paul Jaquays. TSR, Inc., \$7.95. The AD&D® FORGOTTEN REALMS™ campaign series continues to grow with this 64-page supplement, which takes a close look at the lands to the north of the City of Waterdeep. The color maps and text add further detail to the northlands and Trackless Sea, and place firmly in context the descriptions given in FR1 *Waterdeep and the North*. This campaign supplement contains information on the Northmen, the Uthgardt Barbarians, and the northern dwarves and orcs. In addition to providing information on major settlements, strongholds, and ruins, *The Savage Frontier* is also laced with lots of adventure ideas. This supplement is for anyone who can't resist the call of the wild.

WARHAMMER™ *Townscape*. Games Workshop, \$22.95. In this WARHAMMER supplement, you'll find 39 card-stock buildings suitable for use in war games and for displaying special role-playing scenes set in towns and villages. The 25mm-scale buildings are fairly easy to

construct; glue, scissors, a modeling knife, and a metal ruler are all you need. The buildings are not new – they have been taken from previous WARHAMMER building packs. Nevertheless, this is your first chance to get them all together. WARHAMMER *Townscape* is guaranteed to enhance the visual aspects of any tabletop action. This product is available in the U.S. from: Games Workshop US, 1220 Key Highway, Baltimore MD 21230. In the U.K., contact: Games Workshop, Chewton Street, Hilltop, Eastwood, Notts, NG16 3HY.

MERTWIG'S MAZE™ Gamefolio, by Tom Wham. TSR, Inc., \$9.95. The king lies dying, and the evil Grand Wizir intends to seize the kingdom for himself. Only the appearance of the king's long-lost children can stave off this dreadful event. Though many claim to be the king's rightful heirs, only a character possessing a royal birthmark and a royal treasure can hope to become king. Thus, you have to go adventuring to find a treasure and a birthmark. To assist you in your perilous quest, you can hire various companions in the city to fight and cast spells for you. Then you set off to brave the horrors lurking in the wilds of the kingdom.

This game features a large map of the kingdom, eight card displays showing the maps of the adventure areas, a whole bunch of cards, and easy-to-play rules. Unfortunately, you don't get a box in which to keep the bits, so make sure you have some plastic bags on hand. The MERTWIG'S MAZE Gamefolio is hardly serious fantasy, but you wouldn't really expect anything else from the designer of Steve Jackson Games' AWFUL GREEN THINGS FROM OUTER SPACE™ game. The MERTWIG'S MAZE Gamefolio is a wacky and fun-filled game.

Who reviews the reviewers?

Following the review of Mayfair's *City-State of the Invincible Overlord* in DRAGON® issue #136, Jim Bennett, of College Station, Texas, came to its defense. Jim saw the City-State as a good fantasy setting, the city's spacious layout being justified on the grounds that it had recently been rebuilt to maximize the benefits of wide, straight streets and open areas.

While this may well be the case, I still consider this boxed set to be one of the least-convincing urban fantasy settings available. Sure, you can take the descriptions of the buildings (and the NPCs who inhabit them) and turn the whole lot into a vibrant campaign setting, but there are better city packs available which provide superior starting points and which are imbued with far more flavor. Urban settings with straight streets and suburban gardens may be great places to live, but when it comes to a fantasy environment, I'll take colorful descriptions of winding alleys, slums, and docks any day.

Jim's comments raise an interesting point about reviews in general. As a

reviewer, I consider it my job to point out the good and bad aspects of any products I cover. Sometimes a product comes along which I consider to be of inferior quality. Here, I have two options: I can ignore it entirely, reserving the review column for games, supplements, and adventures which I heartily recommend; or I can occasionally review a product which I personally don't like in order to show how it is lacking in certain areas and why I consider products dealing with a similar topic to be superior.

As always, any review reflects the reviewer's interests and perceptions. The "Role-playing Reviews" start off each month by introducing the current topic and putting it into perspective. These introductions give an insight into my opinions on the topic, as well as my thoughts on currently available products.

This is where you come in. I'm interested in hearing what you think the role of the reviews is, any any thoughts you may have on the reviews themselves. Are the reviews too critical, too detailed, or about right? Is there a topic, game, supplement, or adventure that you'd like to see featured? My schedule may prevent me from personally answering your letters, but I'm interested in hearing from you. My mailing address is:

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When Gods Walk the Earth

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Much of terrestrial legend deals with gods who walked the earth in the guises of men and beasts. Sometimes they were summoned by worshipers in times of need, but usually they came and went of their own free will. The mythologies of many peoples tell of the gods' intervention and interference in the lives of mortals. Ancient peoples of earth attributed the events of their times to the direct involvement of the deities. Often, the actions of the gods were for some greater purpose; but normally, they pursued their own selfish interests of revenge, greed, love, and lust.

However, only at the height of their power could the gods visit earth at will. As the "golden age" of the gods waned, so did the frequency of their visits. Furthermore, the gods could not just drop in on earth in their full glory and majesty. Gods who appeared in all their power on earth risked danger and damage to both themselves and mortals. The gods would often lessen the impact on themselves and on lesser beings by taking on familiar shapes – those of humans, beasts, and monsters. In any of these familiar forms, only a portion of a gods being was manifest, allowing the god to move freely (and often unnoticed) among mortal creatures. These manifestations, or avatars, of the gods had access to all the powers normally available to the gods they actually were. But because the avatars also partook of mortal flesh and its inherent weaknesses, the use and extent of those powers was necessarily limited.

In role-playing games such as Chaosium's

RUNEQUEST® game, direct dealings with gods and powerful mythological monsters and demons is a normal part of the quests by which true heroes are made and tested. However, it is possible to use the direct intervention of the gods as a part of balanced game play involving characters who are not yet up to hero stature. The guidelines in this article are designed to be used primarily with RUNEQUEST games, both the second-edition Chaosium rules (RQ II) and the revised third-edition rules (RQ III) published by The Avalon Hill Game Company. In addition, these rules are also intended for use with most role-playing games based on Chaosium's BASIC ROLE-PLAYING game system (including the CALL OF CTHULHU®, STORMBRINGER, SUPERWORLD, and ELFQUEST™ role-playing games).

The first two editions of the RUNEQUEST rules were set in the mythos of Glorantha, in an age when the gods of legend still existed but had ceased to be directly involved in the affairs of mortals. In the golden age before the supremacy of Time (that is, before Time actually began), the gods and other great spirits roamed the earth freely, interacting with mortal creatures. The compromise of Time forced the gods away from the physical plane and into the spiritual plane of existence, where Time did not rule the sequence of events. The gods were able to retain their great power, but in the compromise, they lost the ability to exert free will and became locked into what they had previously become or done. Instead of functioning directly on the physical plane, the gods and great spirits learned to use mortal worshipers to effect their purposes. Great

magics were then worked only by the Priests of the gods.

The greatly revised RQ III places the world setting for the game in ancient Europe, roughly paralleling the Byzantine period of actual Earth history. In this pseudohistorical world, polytheism and the "old gods" of Greece, Rome, Scandinavia, the British Isles, and the Mideast are slowly but surely being replaced by the new monotheistic deities of Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. Though these old gods once walked the world freely, their power has weakened as their followers have diminished. The advance of time has made it difficult if not impossible for them to enter the physical plane without assistance. Although the Priests of the gods still work great magics, strong-willed sorcerers have risen to fill the void in magic use.

Even though circumstance and compromise have worked to prevent the gods from entering the physical plane, the laws of Time have their loopholes. It is possible for the worshipers of gods to find ways to summon their deities to the physical plane (and sometimes it is possible for a god to find a means to summon himself).

As mentioned before, the lesser manifestation of an earth-visiting god takes the form of an avatar. The term comes from Hindu mythology and is defined as the incarnation of a god in human form. For game purposes, however, the avatar need not be a human being or even a humanoid. This being is a representation of the god, containing only a portion of its full abilities. The relationship of the avatar to the god is much like that of a dream dragon (from Gloranthan mythology) to a real dragon. The thoughts and motivations



and desires of the god are there, but the powers it can wield are but a dim shadow of the real gods capabilities.

The summoning

Unless a campaign is played with extremely powerful player characters, the adventurers are more likely to be involved with a preexisting avatar rather than initiating the attempt to summon one. For that reason, the methods of summoning will only be briefly outlined.

Two conditions must be met to summon the avatar of a god. The first condition is a great sacrifice of spiritual Power (POW) on the part of the summoner or summoners. The second condition is that a ritually prepared vessel be available to house the avatar.

In RUNEQUEST games, the acceptable method of summoning a god into avatar form is to call upon Divine Intervention. The summoned deity is then offered a suitable vessel to contain its manifestation on the physical plane. This vessel can be either a human or other sentient being, an appropriate cult animal, or a statue of the god itself. The type of vessel and its willingness (or unwillingness) to perform as an avatar varies from cult to cult. The type of vessel used is mostly up to the preference of the game master (GM). The summoned gods abilities, however, depend on

the god itself and the type of vessel that contains it.

Generally speaking, the amount of POW required to summon a god from the spiritual plane and place it into a vessel on the physical plane is more than a single, normal living creature (even a powerful shaman) can provide. Due to the number of participants that need to be involved, summoning ceremonies are usually performed in temples that have from 150 to 500 worshipers (minor temples) and several resident Priests. For the best chance of a successful summoning, large numbers of people are required. The actual format for this ceremony varies from cult to cult, but the end result is that a number of Priests and Initiates of the cult under the direction of a coordinating High Priest use the Divine (or Rune) magic call Divine Intervention. Although each individual attempts to make his own sacrifice of POW, under the direction of the High Priest, the individual sacrifices are merged into a single, communal request.

To determine the success of a summoning, find the amount of POW sacrificed in the ceremony using the following formula: Multiply the number of worshipers involved in the ceremony by 11%. This represents the number of worshipers who would statistically make their Divine Intervention roll. (Divine Interventions are made by rolling 1d100. If the result is less

than or equal to the Initiate's POW characteristic, the Divine Intervention succeeds and the Initiate permanently loses an amount of POW equal to the roll.) Take the resulting number and multiply it by the result of a 2d4 roll (two four-sided dice which represent an approximation of the average amount of power sacrificed by each Initiate). This final number is the amount of POW available for summoning the god into avatar form.

If PCs (or NPCs with unusually high POW characteristics) participate in the summoning ceremony, roll their Divine Interventions separately from the congregations. Add any contributed POW to the total.

In RQ II, for each successful Priestly Divine Intervention (a Rune magic spell), multiply the number of spell points expended by five. Add the Priests' sacrifice to the worshipers' (Initiates and Rune-lords) total.

The summoners must now make a single percentile roll of less than or equal to the total amount of sacrificed POW to summon their deity and place a portion of its power into the prepared vessel.

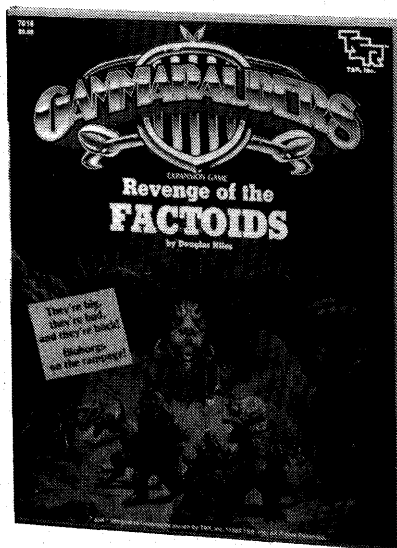
If using RQ III, the High Priest's Ceremony skill (divided by five and rounded up) can be added to the POW total to improve the ceremony's chance of success.

After the roll is made for the summoning, roll 1d4 and subtract one from the

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result. This will determine the effect of the ceremony on the participants. The result of the roll is the percentage of worshippers who died as a result of successfully making their Divine Intervention rolls (if all a character's POW is sacrificed, the character irrevocably dies).

These rules make it unlikely that PCs will summon up gods on a regular basis. However, if the summoning of a gods avatar is necessary to advance a story line in the GM's adventure, assume that it will be successful and that about 1% of the NPCs involved will die of POW loss. Describing the pomp and mysticism of the ceremony and the chilling results of a successful summoning can make for a great prelude to an adventure.

The avatar

If the summoning roll is successful, the prepared vessel becomes an avatar of the summoned god and must be carefully played by the GM from then on. If the avatar has been summoned to accomplish a specific task or mission (such as slaying a demon or curing a plague), it will go about performing that task. Thereafter, unless somehow banished or dismissed back to the spirit plane, the avatar remains.

The summoned avatar is now a "living" free-willed creature, but is under obligation to its summoners to perform the task for which they created it. Once that task is complete, that control is broken, and unless banished from the world, the avatar will follow its own desires.

Because the avatar is actually a representation of things that the god really wants, and not necessarily what its followers have decided the nature of the god to be, the avatar will generally go about making a nuisance of itself, demanding constant worship, substantial tribute, huge temples - possibly even sacrifices and the elimination of rivals in holy war. Failure to perform these functions means facing a gods wrath. Even the most tolerant worshippers of a benign and benevolent god may soon find themselves chafing at their deity's incessant demands (and looking for

likely heroes to put an end to their new suffering).

To role-play a freed avatar, the GM must imagine in detail what the gods particular wants, motivations, and needs might be. Although wants and motivations vary from god to god, most avatars have a need to be worshipped and needed, as if they were the real god and not just a lesser copy. Initially, the need to be needed motivates the avatar, and it will seek to please its followers. An avatar of a healing god may create hospitals to cure the sick. A warrior god may extend its protection to the masses by fighting their enemies.

However, as the avatar begins to develop a personality separate from the original deity (in essence becoming a completely separate entity), its plans may become grandiose or counterproductive to society. It becomes greedy, haughty, demanding, and even dangerous. The healing avatar may cause illnesses in order to have more sick to cure; the war avatar may bring nations into conflict. Both will demand the devotion of their followers and tribute worthy of their imagined status. Although avatars are not full gods, they are powerful enough to make sure their demands are followed.

Avatar bodies

The abilities and powers possessed by an avatar vary with the type of vessel (sentient being, animal, or statue) in which it is placed and with the relative success or power of the summoning. Although the selection of a vessel and its preparation varies from cult to cult, and may depend on the need of the summoners, they generally conform to the following types.

Humanoid (sentient being): For most benevolent cults (the term is loosely applied), the sentient vessel will be a ritually prepared volunteer, aware of the personal danger's (and benefits) involved in accepting the spirit of a god into his body. The host's gender should usually match that of the summoned deity. Nonbenevolent cults may conscript a vessel off a back alley on a dark night.

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Table 1

Avatar Vessels

Ability	Human form	Animal form	Statue
STR	1d6 X host's	1d6 X host's	20 + (1d8 X 10)
CON	10 X host's	10 X host's	SIZ x 10
SIZ	2d6 + host's	2 X host's	Hosts
INT	3d6 + 12	1d6 + 6	3d6
POW	2d4 x 20	2d4 X 15	SIZ x 10
DEX	1d3 x host's	1d3 X host's	(2d6 X 2) - (SIZ/10)
CHA/APP	(1d4 + 1) x 10	(1d6 + 1) X 5	1d4 x 10

Animal: This is always an animal that is special or sacred to the god and the cult. It is normally a superior specimen of its kind, without blemish or infirmity, and is ritually cleaned and sanctified. The host's gender should usually match that of the summoned deity.

Statue: This is always a reasonably well-sculpted image of the god. It may be of any size, but usually the POW that the sculpture contains is limited to 10 times its Size (SIZ) characteristic.

Avatar powers

Once the avatar is successfully summoned, the GM should use the guidelines in Table 1 to create the avatar's characteristics. GMs should work out hit points, hit locations, and other attributes as if for a

normal character. Note that for CALL OF CTHULHU gods, the statistics never exceed those listed in the rule books for those gods.

The relative success of the summoning also dictates the power of the summoned being. The GM should subtract the value of the percentile dice roll that was made to summon the avatar from the total amount of POW successfully sacrificed during the summoning. At the GM's discretion, the difference may be distributed between the avatar's characteristic scores (increasing them beyond the values normal for the selected vessel). The GM should reserve such an increase for the god's specialty characteristic. For instance, Lhankor Mhy, the Gloranthan god of knowledge, would have a drastically higher intelligence, while the storm god Orlanth would have a high Strength and Constitution.

Appearance: The appearance of the summoned avatar depends upon the host vessel. A humanoid (sentient being) assumes the popularly accepted appearance of the deity, in glorious, living color. The animal avatar looks like a beautiful, powerful member of its species. A statue takes on the appearance of flesh, but maintains the feel, of its original material (stone, wood, or metal).

Spirit Magic use: The avatar knows all Spirit Magic spells (Battle Magic spells in RQ II) that are not specialty spells limited to the followers of another cult. Variable POW spells are known for up to six points maximum. This type of magic may be cast at normal POW cost.

Divine Magic use: The avatar knows all the Divine Magic spells (Rune Magic spells in RQ II) allowed for its own cult at the maximum allowable power (but never more than six points per spell). If the avatar is at its seat of power (the area in which it was summoned), Divine Magics may be cast as if they were Spirit Magics of the same POW cost. Away from this seat of power, casting Divine Magics causes permanent POW loss to the avatar equal to the point value of the spell.

Sorcery: Avatars in RUNEQUEST games cannot use sorcery skills or magics. Avatars in other game systems may use some or all magics available in that game system (see below).

Magic in BASIC ROLE-PLAYING games:

Avatars in BASIC ROLE-PLAYING game systems may use all spells normally allowed to the deity in its full manifestation (at the GM's discretion), but with limits imposed by its semimortal form. An avatar of the outer god Nyarlathotep in CALL OF CTHULHU games can use all the spells of the Cthulhu mythos. An avatar of Donblas, god of Justice in the STORM-BRINGER game, would be a 5th-Rank Sorcerer and may manifest the four Virtues of Law (Attack, Defense, Knowledge, and Travel) at any time. An avatar in the MAGIC WORLD game (from the old WORLDS OF WONDER boxed set) would know a number of spells equal to his Intelligence and would use them at 95% ability.

Weapon skills: A human or humanoid-statue avatar uses its cult weapons (both attack and parry) at 100% ability, with a +1 bonus for each two points of its Intelligence. If no weapons are available or usable (as is the case for animal avatars), the avatar punches, kicks, claws, or bites at the same ability as its animal host. Warrior gods receive an additional 2d20 points of skill in any event.

Other skills: An avatar uses all cult-special skills at 100% ability. Any other skills common to the culture are usable at 30% plus 1d10 X 5 ability (at the GM's discretion).

Armor: An avatar's natural armor is generally raised by 1d6 points. If the avatar is capable of wearing other armor, he will generally enchant that armor to protect himself as much as possible. Thereafter, he will use spells to further increase his own protection.

Shapeshifting: An avatar in a human-host vessel may shapeshift to any cult animal. All characteristics and statistics remain the same.


Size alteration: An avatar may alter his size at will, up to 10 times larger or smaller than his original size. However, he attacks as if he were his previous size. He is, in essence, expanding or shrinking without gaining or losing mass.

Special powers: The avatar has at least one of the powers ascribed to the god, usually something that serves the purpose for which he was summoned: a healing god's merest touch might cure the sick; a sun god would glow with light and warmth; a fertility god might cause crops to grow in salted earth.

Offspring: An avatar who mates with a mortal creates superior offspring. When creating these special children, roll their characteristics normally, but replace the lowest die in each roll with eight points. For example, when rolling for STR, the player rolls a one, a five, and a six. The one is replaced by an eight for a total of 19 points. Thus, it is possible for an avatar's child to have characteristics of up to 20 points.

Destroying the avatar

There are three ways to send an avatar back to its source. The first way is to




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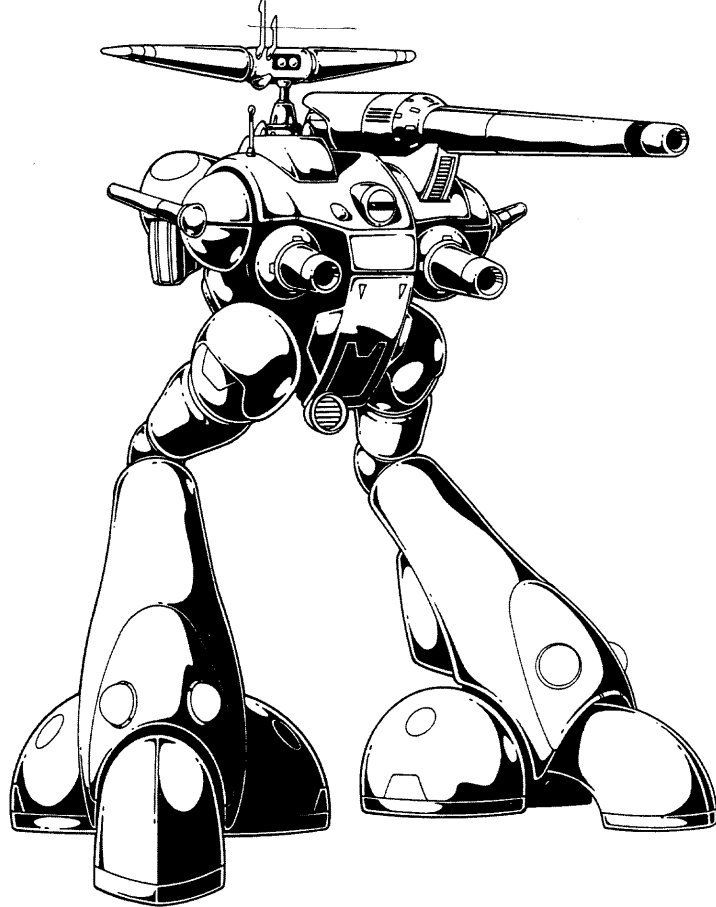
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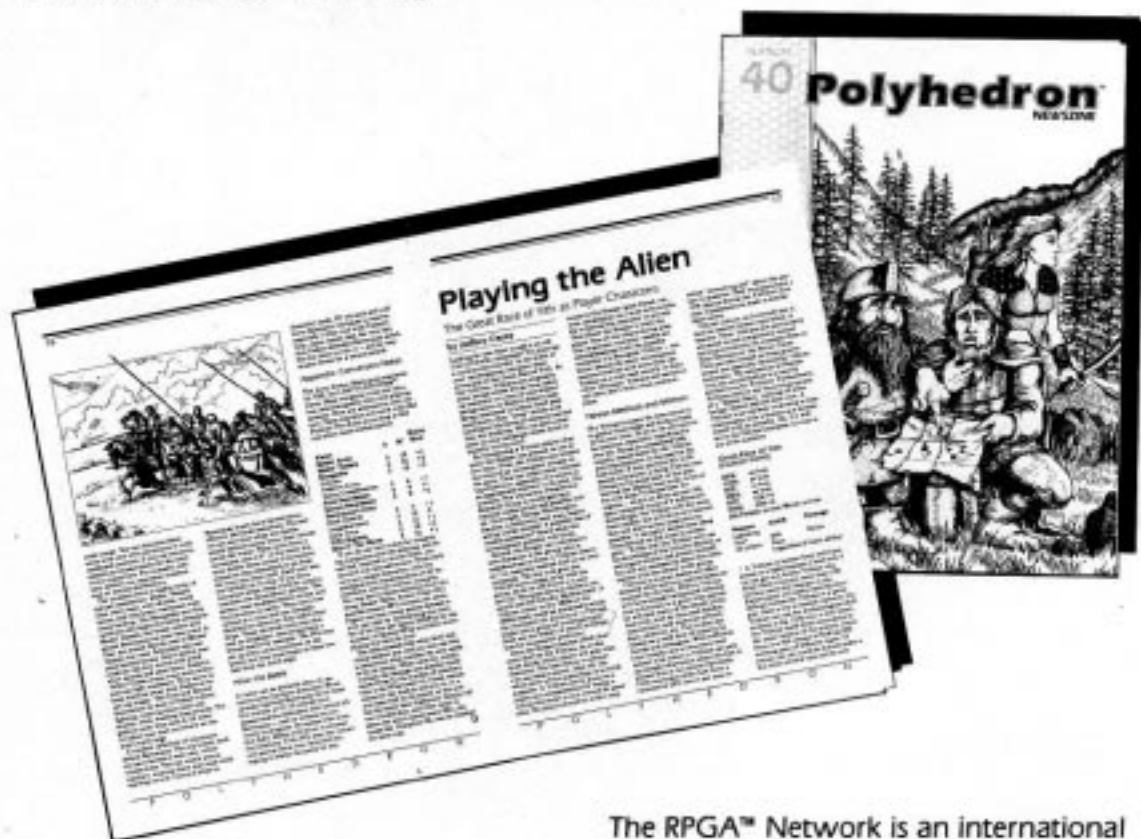
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destroy its vessel (i.e., kill it). The second is to reduce the vessel's POW characteristic to one-tenth of its normal figure (a POW of 100 would have to be reduced to 10), forcing the avatar to weaken its hold on the host vessel. Since avatars are highly magical beings, even an army may have difficulty destroying an avatar in this manner.

The third way is to find the avatar's secret weakness. Fortunately, each avatar has a flaw in its construction placed there by the stresses of Time. Somewhere in the world, there will be a weakness that will immediately cause the spirit of the avatar to depart its vessel. A number of weaknesses are suggested in Table 2. Each of these weaknesses needs to be further developed by the GM to fit into the ongoing campaign. These weaknesses are provided as scenario hooks designed to stimulate adventure ideas. The weakness can be chosen by the GM or selected by rolling 1d20 on Table 2.

The mission to destroy a god will necessarily be a three-part epic. First, the heroes must discover what will force the avatar to leave the world. Second, they must obtain that object. Third, they must use the weakness against the god (which generally means coming into the avatar's presence).

Of course, the avatar knows its own weakness and will do everything in its power to protect itself from harm. Hidden items will be guarded, protected by great magics, and disguised. Vulnerable areas will be protected by armor and spells, and the avatar himself will usually be guarded by fanatical followers. Although RUNE-QUEST game deities are not omniscient, the GM can probably assume that an avatar will be aware of attacks against it and any missions to discover its weakness.

When an avatar departs a host vessel, the host undergoes incredible stress. Each type of vessel must make a saving roll to avoid being destroyed as the avatar departs. Roll 1d100.

Animal: The animal survives if the roll is less than or equal to three times the animal's original CON. If the animal fails the roll, it dies instantly.

Humanoid: The person survives if the roll is less than or equal to five times the character's original CON. If the vessel fails the roll, it ages at the rate of one year per minute until death from old age occurs (successful Divine Intervention can stop but not reverse the aging). Additionally, the character must make a 1d100 roll of less than or equal to its original INT times five or be reduced to incurable insanity (gibbering and drooling, but nothing more complex). Finally, the character must make a 1d100 roll of less than or equal to five times the average of its original POW and CON, or it retains the physical form or appearance of the god. If the host vessel survives all this, each of its characteristics (STR, INT, POW, etc.) will be increased by 1d6 points.

Table 2

Avatar Weaknesses

1d20 Weakness

- 1 The avatar's heart or some other vital organ is magically separated from its body. This organ will usually be hidden and/or well protected. It may be possible that the avatar will become even more powerful if its organ is rejoined with its body.
- 2 A missile weapon made from a particular wood, metal, or stone will slay the avatar instantly, but will not necessarily kill the vessel. Treat such an attack against the vessel as if it were a critical hit (an attack of 5% or less).
- 3 The venom or blood from a powerful, mythological creature will slay the avatar slowly. The avatar will probably order all such creatures slain.
- 4 The avatar has a preset destiny. When a certain set of events occur, the avatar will be banished to the spirit world again. This could include stellar and planetary conjunctions, the birth of a particular child, the arrival of a mysterious stranger, etc.
- 5 The avatar has a vulnerable spot or "Achilles' heel" somewhere on its body. The location is determined by rolling 1d20 to determine hit location, using a chart that corresponds to the avatar's host vessel. The location has no natural armor protection. A hit here could be instantly fatal.
- 6 A particular magical item will banish the deity. This could be an enchanted weapon, a staff, a mystic orb, etc.
- 7 Upon demand, the avatar must perform a preordained task that will result in its banishment. Speaking in front of the avatar could be deadly!
- 8 When all persons responsible for summoning the avatar have died, the deity will be banished. Because of this, the avatar will usually keep at least one summoner alive against the summoner's will.
- 9 If a particular graven image of the god is destroyed, desecrated, or altered, the god will be banished. This could include paintings, sculptures, tapestries, sand pictures, carvings, drawings, etc. The item will usually be well protected, possibly with multiple duplications to confuse would-be god slayers.
- 10 A Divine Intervention similar to the one required to summon the avatar will banish it - provided, of course, that it is of equal or greater power.
- 11 A more-powerful avatar must be summoned to destroy the existing avatar. However, this could lead to problems similar to those of the "Little old lady who swallowed a fly. . . ."
- 12 A particular gem, magical item, or object of no apparent value must be stolen from the avatar and then destroyed.
- 13 An enemy of the avatar is released from imprisonment to wreak its vengeance on the avatar. However, it may also decide to stay and wreak its vengeance on everyone else.
- 14 The avatar can be slain only by a particular person who meets specific criteria, such as being a virgin, the seventh son of a seventh son, a blind man, etc. (the more unusual, the better).
- 15 The avatar's soul is kept in a small animal. Destroying the animal will banish the avatar.
- 16 The avatar must replenish or replace its POW each day from a special magical item, machine, or magical place. If the POW source is destroyed or stolen, the avatar loses 10 POW points per day until it finally withers away.
- 17 The avatar may be slain only by one of its own offspring. Treat all hits against the avatar caused by such a foe as critical hits (maximum damage, no armor protection). The avatar is unable to personally defend itself or return attacks against its own child. However, it may command underlings to perform such acts.
- 18 The avatar may be slain only by the offspring of another god's avatar. Treat these attacks as described for item 17 above.
- 19-20 Roll twice again on this table, ignoring rolls over 18. The results of both rerolls must be somehow combined.

Statue: The statue survives if the roll is less than or equal to five times its SIZ; subtract five from this value for a stone

statue; subtract 10 for an iron/steel statue; and add five for a wooden statue. If the vessel fails the roll, it crumbles to dust. **Ω**

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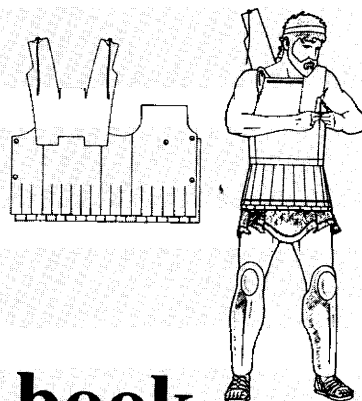
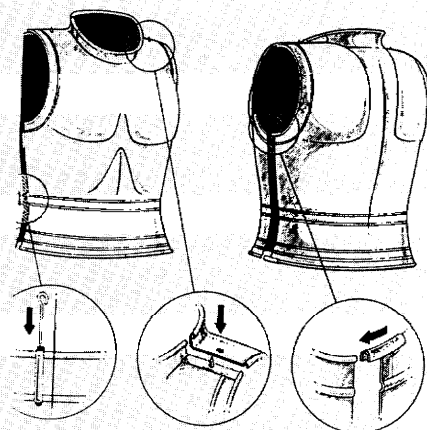
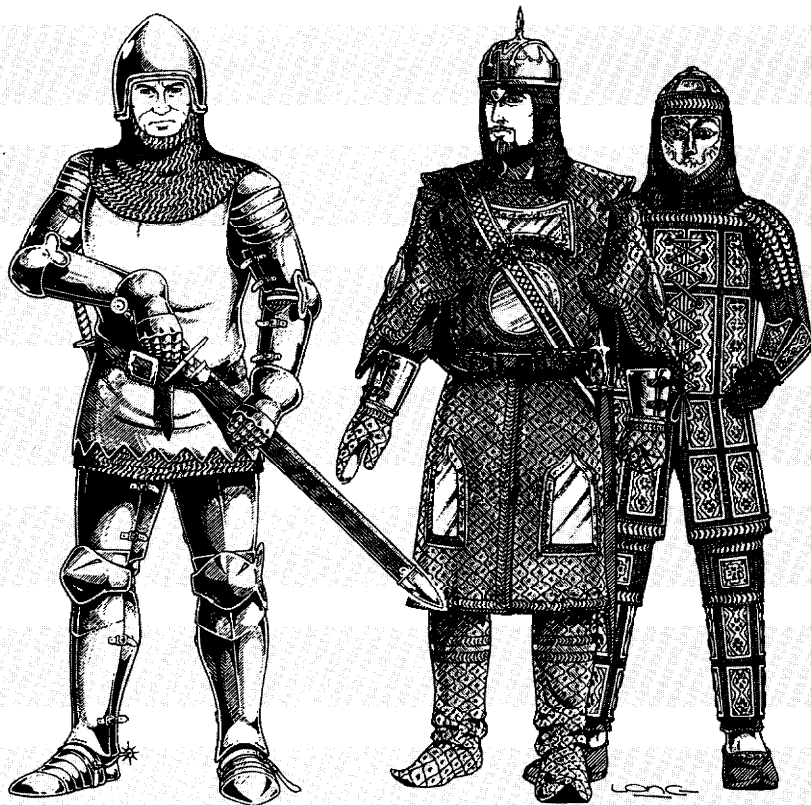
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The Game Wizards

A little bit of everything for everyone

I have several bits and pieces of news to present to the DRAGON® Magazine readers in this issue, and here they are:

Pun contest winner

A while ago [issue #135], I ran a quick and easy AD&D® game pun contest. I received hundreds of letters, some of them great (they were all interesting, at the very least). My personal favorite was a real groaner: the vel crow, which had odd protrusions attached to its wings. Some of the others were:

The C-monster, C-dragon, sand witch, and *arrow of sleighing*;

The gate scroll that produced a metal gate;

A servant whose name was Aerial;

A small, square, brown creature that bit back if bitten, called a brownie (twelve make their lair together in a metal pan);

A cat the size of a small house (a house cat);

The *dwarven thrower* +3, a magical hammer that hurled the dwarf who used it at the intended target;

A two-handed sword that clapped whenever it was used; and,

Hundreds of blue dragons, including sad ones, singing ones, and ones that made their lairs in toilet bowls.

I thank each and every one of you for your wonderful puns. They made some exhausting workdays a little brighter.

On writing for TSR

This statement appears every year, because there are a lot of gamers out there dying to create products for TSR, Inc. First of all, it's tough even getting our attention – not because your ideas aren't good, but because for every solid idea we get, we see over a hundred bad ones.

The best way to be considered for free-lance design work on TSR game projects is to first have articles or modules published in DRAGON Magazine, DUNGEON® Adven-

tures, or POLYHEDRON™ Newszine [*write for their guidelines first, however*]. If you have had materials printed by other game companies, that counts, too. You can then talk to our free-lance coordinator. Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope with a cover letter (described below) to:

Free-lance Coordinator
TSR, Inc.
P.O. Box 756
Lake Geneva WI 53147

Don't send your great ideas or any other products you might have in mind with this get-acquainted letter. Just state your qualifications and the fact that you are available for free-lance design work. Mention the TSR product lines that you feel most qualified to work with, and TSR will get back to you.

This introduction process also applies to anyone wishing to edit game materials for TSR on a free-lance basis. Letters from prospective free-lance editors should be addressed to the Free-lance Editing Coordinator at the given address.

Please remember that there are more astronauts in NASA than there are successful game designers and editors. This should tell you how hard it is to get your foot in the door.

Jim Ward's Pick of the Month

In past columns, I have briefly talked about the five boxed game sets TSR is producing this year. The more I see of them in the developmental stages, the more wonderful they look. We'll highlight them once more for interested readers.

Dawn of the Emperors (TSR product #1037) hits the stands in July, and it deals with two huge D&D® game countries. Thyatis is the largest military power in the Known World, and Alphatia is a country of wizards whose magical strength is beyond imagining. The player characters will be

thrown into the middle of the war between those two nations. The adventure and excitement possible in this situation are perfect for any gaming style.

The City of Greyhawk (TSR product #1043) is also a July release. The full-color poster map of the city is a delight to the eyes, and the two 96-page booklets are filled with details on life in this magical city. Full-color, 8½" × 11" cards provide quick and easy adventures. This is a package that I am unusually proud of.

The *Deluxe City Campaign Set* (TSR product #6890), yet another July release, is a product that has been long needed. It fills all the gaps on running New York City for Judges of the MARVEL SUPER HEROES® game system. Heroes new and old are covered in detail. The Big Apple and its infinite possibilities for adventure are brought to the reader in grand style. All MARVEL SUPER HEROES game fans will be delighted to have this set.

Spelljammer (TSR product #1049), which comes out in September, sends the AD&D game into outer space! This concept is quickly developing a style and beauty all its own. Jeff Grubb has shown me some of his material for this set (everything of which I like), and all those in Creative Services have also thrown their two cents into Jeff's idea hat. When the product is completed, we will have a tool to connect all of the AD&D campaign worlds together and increase your gaming enjoyment.

Time of the Dragon (TSR product #1050) comes out in October. Set on the side of the DRAGONLANCE® world of Krynn opposite Ansalon, this campaign set will be a winner with all DRAGONLANCE saga fans. David "Zeb" Cook is the designer of this project, and he has brought a new perspective to the campaign. I liked his attitude from the very beginning, when he said, "Imagine what would happen to the world when a huge rock hit. . . ." He immediately began talking about huge volcanoes and the pressure on the planet's crust, then spun tales of tinker gnomes building ships to sail lava rivers – and a lot more. Zeb is going to deliver a product that everyone who loves Krynn can appreciate.

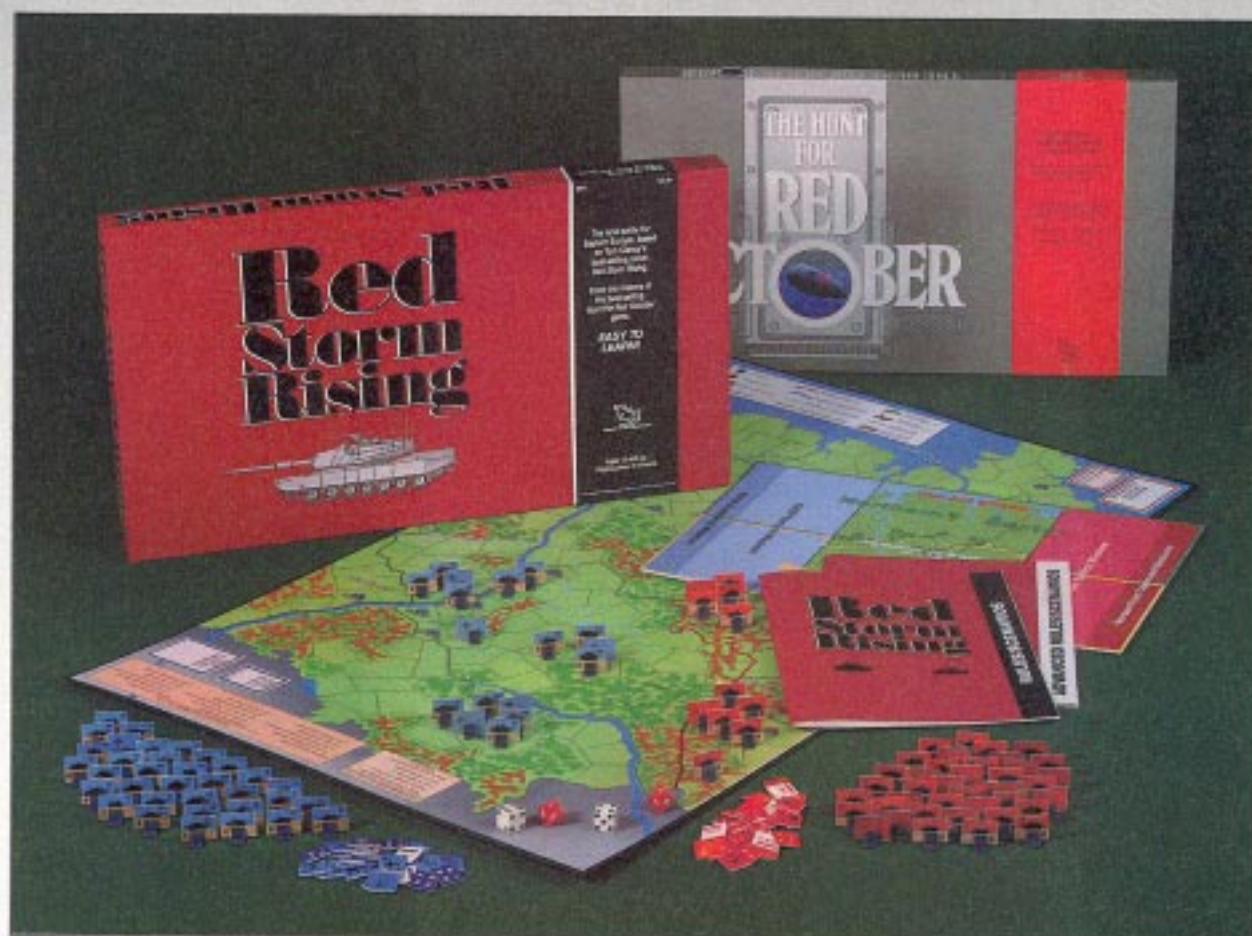
[Each of the boxed sets described above will sell for \$18.00 retail.] Ω

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THE ROLE OF Computers

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Game after game. with no end in sight

Zany Golf: Sinking a put at the Energy Hole.



Zany Golf: Surrealism at Hamburger Hole.



As we write this column in February 1989, ahead lies another year of computer trade shows. The recent Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas and MacWorld in San Francisco are now only hectic memories of demonstrations and discussions. Both shows gave debuts of technologically advanced hardware and software goodies to a most agreeable consuming public. The slowdown in the computer industry that was predicted by "those-in-the-know" has not come to pass. Computer gaming continues to increase in popularity.

There is ever-growing interest in the Apple Macintosh II, a computer that is highly suited for game development. This is due to that computer's advanced yet easy-to-learn user interface and multicolor capabilities. MS-DOS computers continue to advance as machines of choice by game developers, with the Commodore Amiga taking a close second in that regard. The Apple IIGS is also becoming a favorite development machine, according to the statistics we've seen. With prices expected to drop on all of these units over the next several months, we see no end to the continual development and marketing of superior software entertainments.

Reviews

Discovery Software

163 Conduit Street
Annapolis, MD 21401
(301) 268-9877

Arkanoïd

Apple Macintosh version \$49.95

Okay, we admit it: We're hooked! There's no getting away from the fact that *Arkanoïd* is one habit we have no intention of shaking. This is one fantastic arcade game for Macintosh aficionados.

Back in the late seventies, there was *Breakout*, for the Apple II computer. This low-resolution game had graphics that consisted of multicolored blocks. You used paddles or a joystick to manipulate an on-screen paddle that batted a ball at the wall of blocks. When the ball struck the wall, it knocked a brick out of position and returned to the bottom of the screen. With nimble fingers, you would reposition your on-screen paddle to once again return the ball to the wall. The object was to keep this up until all of the blocks battered away. Then, a new screen with another wall would appear.

Breakout was a big hit. In one form or another, it has survived the past decade in a variety of presentations. In fact, Macintosh users may also have had the opportunity to play the DA version that is still available on many bulletin-board systems. Enter Taito, a Japanese firm responsible for many of the coin-operated arcade game hits popular at 7-11 stores and pizza parlors, with *Arkanoïd*. With Discovery Software managing conversions and marketing in the United States, *Arkanoïd* has finally been released for the Macintosh. A version for the Commodore Amiga remains one of the hottest-selling products in that gaming market.

The premise of *Arkanoïd* is quite simple: It is *Breakout* turned into a space-adventure game with vastly improved graphics, sound, wall varieties, and ball-reflection algorithms. In this revised game, the starship *Arkanoïd* carries nearly five million human beings in states of suspended animation in its hold. These humans have survived a brutal alien attack and are seeking a new home. Without warning, the upper deck of the *Arkanoïd* is destroyed by a single drone fighter. The ship's reactor begins to overload, and help must be obtained to prevent the annihilation of all aboard. The *Vaus*, the *Arkanoïd*'s emergency shuttle, blasts away from the ship and enters warp space, only to be brought to a halt inside a space labyrinth. As pilot of the *Vaus*, you must shatter the walls surrounding the emergency shuttle.

The Macintosh mouse controls the *Vaus*, which can be equated to the paddle in *Breakout*. You move the *Vaus* under an



The Legend of Blacksilver. A brief voyage by sail.



The Legend of Blacksilver: All mouth but no talk.



Might & Magic, Book II: The view from above.

Might & Magic, Book II: A fight in the making.



Might & Magic, Book II: A creature rare and wonderful.



Might & Magic, Book II: An eagle's eye look ahead.



energy ball, using the ball to strike at the space walls surrounding the shuttle. There are 33 game different levels from which to select, and two players can compete simultaneously for the highest score.

There are several ways to reinforce the Vaus. As the energy ball strikes some of the bricks in the labyrinth, special Power Capsules are knocked loose. These capsules can elongate the Vaus, cause it to capture the falling energy ball for better aim at the wall, or turn it into a laser that blasts away the enclosing walls.

Falling debris can cause well-aimed energy strikes to ricochet away from the target wall, thereby increasing the strikes' return speeds. Be careful of ricochets that occur near the Vaus, or you'll find yourself spinning your mouse's wheel aimlessly as the energy ball disappears at the bottom of the screen.

The walls themselves consist of a variety of patterns. Some of the bricks are metallic and cannot be destroyed. These bricks form pathways along which a well-aimed energy ball can travel and destroy other portions of the wall that cannot be reached by an external attack. But when you finish off one wall, another appears to take its place.

You can select as many as five lives for each game. Additional lives can be earned as your score climbs higher. The sound effects that accompany the game are extremely well planned, such as the metallic *boing* that accompanies the energy ball as it strikes a metal brick. The game does not, however, take advantage of the Macintosh II's larger screen. When using this computer, you must also be certain to access the Control Panel and change your monitor setting to two-color mode.

After continuous *Arkanoid* play of over 45 hours, we've come to the conclusion that this offering remains challenging and exciting. *Arkanoid* will certainly become one of the classic arcade games for the Macintosh computer family.

Electronic Arts

1820 Gateway Drive
San Mateo CA 94404
(415) 571-7171

Zany Golf

Apple IIGS version

\$39.95

What happens when you combine superb animation, graphics, music, and sound in one package? What happens when these elements are combined in a miniature-golf game? You get perfection! *Zany Golf* is the game, and it is one of the best arcade games that we've played in several months. Will Harvey and his crew at Sandcastle Productions have created a game that should turn several Apple IIGS computer fans away from all the boring shoot-'em-up games and make them take notice. *Zany Golf* is a tongue-in-cheek parody of a miniature-golf course, with a few nutty twists added for excitement.

Even when booting the game, the title screen and accompanying music astonish the senses and add real character to this game. After you select the number of players (one to four), the game begins with a sign, superb in its graphic detail, that indicates the name that this course has been given. Once the course is loaded, you get an overview of the first hole as well as any special instructions. Once you click

the mouse button, you see your ball on the three-dimensional course. The graphics are so real you swear you could almost touch the objects on the screen.

The object of *Zany Golf* is to play your ball into the hole at or under par. Putting the ball is simple – just click and hold on the mouse button while dragging it backward. A dotted line appears and this reveals the angle and power assigned to your putt. When the button is released, the ball is struck. From here, it should go where you wish it to go: into the hole (at least in theory).

This would normally be a simple game to play. However, there are restrictions and obstacles that hinder your ability to score easily. In the upper right-hand corner of your screen is a box that reveals how many shots you have remaining in which to sink your shot. When these shots are taken, the game ends. If you sink the ball without using all of your strokes, the number remaining is transferred to the next hole. In addition, you get a number of extra shots equal to the par of that hole. There are two other methods to gain strokes. You might be told there is a fairy or timer on the hole. Hitting the fairy on the course gives you extra strokes, while sinking your ball before the timer runs out gives from one to four free strokes.

Each hole has a name. There are the Castle, Magic Carpet, and Energy Holes, to name just three. A musical theme is also assigned to each hole. If you hit your ball onto a checkered floor spread at the Magic Carpet Hole, you can control the ball's movement by using the mouse. The Ant Hill Hole has a mind of its own, making it difficult to complete a shot.

But the Pinball Hole surprised us the most. Here you actually have to play pinball before you can make the ball go into the hole. With these obstacles, *Zany Golf* provides a challenge to anyone who plays the game.

This is one of Electronic Art's best Apple IIGS products. The animation, music, and sound effects make this game a unique experience. This game is easy enough for kids to learn and addictive enough for adults who want to play "just one game." Furthermore, *Zany Golf* is great for parties. This game is a must buy for Apple IIGS users.

Epyx, Inc.

600 Galveston Drive
P.O. Box 8020
Redwood City CA 94063
(415) 366-0606

The Legend of Blacksilver

Commodore 64/128 version \$39.95

Charles and John Dougherty, whose initial commercial success was *Legacy of the Ancients*, have once again parlayed their programming capabilities into a new fantasy role-playing game, *The Legend of Blacksilver*. This game moves C64/128 gaming up another notch with its first-person views and 3-D effects that only a few months ago wouldn't have been dreamed possible on the C64/128. Add enhanced visuals and sound effects, from torches sizzling in their wall sconces to the ocean lapping against the shore, and a plot with more variety than Napa Valley grapes, and you have an adventure game worthy of inclusion in your software library.

The planet Bantross, where the game's action takes place, has been suddenly tossed into a state of disorder. Not only has the king been kidnapped, but an evil baron has decided to rule the globe. In a dream, you are informed by Princess Aylea that a hero is needed. Within his mines, the evil Baron Taragas has located Blacksilver, a mineral that contains powerful magical properties. With this mineral, the Baron will be able to exercise his designs on the entire planet.

When you accept the validity of the dream and decide to participate in the adventure, you find that there are 16 different towns to visit, five dungeons totalling 40 levels of mind-boggling action, a special 22-section labyrinth, and 82 nasties (64 of them outdoor creatures) to confront your every move.

You become the champion for the king's daughter, but as with any good fantasy role-playing game, there is no single element to conquer. One success is dependent upon another quest's completion. Without a full and complete investigation of all elements, the game cannot be won.

The towns not only offer sustenance and other critical supplies but also enable you to earn money by working at odd jobs. One such task we undertook was in the town of Iron Forge (look to the northeast). The Sweet Shop needed a package delivered to the town of Crissold Creek, a journey fraught with danger and death.

Other elements of this game include a variety of tips to help you along the way. For example, if you pay the town, jail guards the correct number of monetary pieces, they may allow the prisoners within to tell you a tale worth recording.

The Legend of Blacksilver also includes a full-color map showing the Lands of Thalen and the Lost Lands of Maelbane. Name stickers included in the box can be placed on the map as you locate each specific area; they can also be moved to new locations when you find out that your initial placements were incorrect. There are also stickers for dungeons, temples, and other strange locales (such as the labyrinth). When you come across a town, it's a good idea to map each building and make notes

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of what might be offered there, including the prices of objects of war.

The game is controlled by a joystick. All of the commands specific to your current environment are shown on the left side of the screen. You simply move the cursor to highlight the command you wish to exercise, then press the fire button on the joystick.

When adventuring outdoors, you'll normally spot a creature advancing upon you before being pounced upon. You can approach the beast, stalk it, wait for it, or simply flee and hope you're faster than it is. If you wait for the creature to come within range, you can battle it, charge it, cast a spell, or select the Other option. The latter selection is quite appropriate, especially if the adversary is of human form. This option allows you to barter with the creature, and is thus a great method for obtaining a variety of objects (such as potions, food, and weapons).

The Legend of Blacksilver is a vast adventure that offers hours of interesting game play. With the convenience of game saves, you should progress at a decent pace without becoming bored or overtaxed. Our only wish is that the game-save feature had been incorporated into all areas of play, not only outdoors or in a dungeon. We certainly recommend that Commodore gamers take a peek at *The Legend of Blacksilver* for inclusion in their software libraries.

Interplay Productions

1575 Corporate Drive
Costa Mesa CA 92626
(714) 549-2411

Battle Chess

Commodore Amiga version \$49.95

Battle Chess is a chess game for the Amiga, but with a new twist. Its first screen exhibits a set of 3-D animated figures which represent chess pieces, each highly detailed and graphically outstanding. Moving these pieces adds even more realism to the game, as pawns move forward, knights march, and the queen's hips sway as she walks. The sound accompanying each piece adds to the quality of the game: the knight's armor chinks as he marches, and the bishop's leather sandals slap against the marble floor. Clicking the menu reveals a scroll held by two cupids. As the user chooses an option, the cherubs' wings flap furiously.

After setting up the pieces on a two-dimensional board, you can play out classic chess strategies or test new ones. Also, you can replay a move in case of a mistake. The computer can play at nine different levels and offers help through its "suggest move" menu option. Two human players (at the same machine or via modem), a player and the Amiga, or the Amiga by itself can engage in *Battle Chess*.

Each move is made by clicking on a piece and then clicking on its destination. When you take an opponent's piece, the

action really begins. When two pieces converge on one square, they actually fight each other. A bishop's staff turns into a spear as it stabs the queen, and a knight chops a pawn's puny weapon in half as it buries its sword into the pawn's head. The graphics, however, are not gruesome, and some are particularly humorous. The sound and animation during these battles are breathtaking. Like chess, though, the captured piece always loses.

Battle Chess adds a new dimension to chess. The only problems with this game is that there are a limited number of action sequences, so continuous viewings may cause boredom for some people.

The graphics and sound reveal that Interplay is not limited to role-playing games, but can be just as creative in the strategy market. We recommend this game to chess enthusiasts, people looking for a game with a twist, and those looking for a game that utilizes the Amiga's capabilities. All in all, *Battle Chess* is a good effort by Interplay.

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Space Harrier 3-D

Requires SEGA's 3-D glasses

**** 1/2

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32 WEST HEMMING ST., LETCHAM, ANGUS, DD8 2PU.

Space Harrier is back, and this time it's in 3-D! The *Space Harrier* returns to stop an evil tyrant from corrupting the peaceful Land of the Dragons. This can be done only by finding Euria, the missing heir to the throne. Knowing the consequences of your last mission in the Land of the Dragons, you bravely set out to return justice to this world.

Played with the SEGA controller, *Space Harrier 3-D* is a fast-paced action game that keeps you on your toes. The graphics are as well done as in the first *Space Harrier* game, and the three-dimensional action adds outstanding visual effects with colorful backgrounds and characters. The 13 game stages provide constant challenge as you battle your way to the finish.

You can run across the ground or take to the air using your flight belt (something you must wear at all times). Enemies and obstacles are numerous and will attack you with every means available. Some of the stationary obstacles can be destroyed, while others are immune even to your atomic blaster.

At the end of each game stage, you fight an evil captain. Each captain can absorb more punishment than the last, so they become more difficult to defeat. Furthermore, their firepower is greater than the other enemies you've faced earlier in the game. If you do complete all 13 stages, you must then fight each of the captains, one at a time in sequence. Should you finish them off, the evil king then comes after you and tries to dissuade you from ending his tyranny over the Land of the Dragons.

Space Harrier 3-D sets an example for other video systems by showing what qualities are needed to create a good action game. The animation is smooth, even with the complex 3-D effects. The sound is not quite as good as that which accompanied the original *Space Harrier*, but it is still enjoyable. We especially like the game's continuation feature that allows you to play on even if killed (sort of like putting another token into a coin-operated game to forge ahead, even though your time has run out). An option screen allows you to alter the difficulty of the game or change from 3-D to 2-D.

This offering is a constant challenge because of the difficulty in remembering each alien's attack pattern; there are over 50 aliens in *Space Harrier 3-D*, and each uses a different tactic to destroy you. The 3-D effects can sometimes strain your eyes and leave you with a temporary headache. Also, when there are several enemies on the screen, the animation has a tendency to flicker, which could be distracting to some players. *Space Harrier 3-D* is a most appropriate SEGA cartridge for any arcade enthusiast.

***Wonder Boy in Monster Land* * * * * 1/2**

Wonder Boy in Monster Land is a good game with a bad name: In this sequel to SEGA's *Wonder Boy* game, our hero, Bock Lee Temjin, must save Wonder Land from

a dragon and its evil henchmen. Game play is superb. As *Wonder Boy*, who is now a teenager, you must travel through various lands to gain information and better items with which to kill the evil dragon.

When you start, you are wearing leather armor but must still find a weapon. Luckily, a sword is not far afield. During your journey through 12 mysterious lands, you encounter many creatures - most of them hostile. You can slay them with your sword, but some of these creatures require more than a single hit to end their lives. You can also pick up swords of increasing power as you move through the game. After killing an enemy, you might find his money useful for buying needed items. Or perhaps your victim possessed an object that will garner game points and help you later in the adventure. Exploring in *Wonder Boy in Monster Land* is great fun. You can locate hidden shops, extra money, new levels, and various other surprises.

The game's on-screen life meter is full when play begins. Life is lost each time you take damage in combat. You can regain health by paying for additional life in the first-aid room, and can even obtain more life at certain locales in the game. Also shown on screen is an hourglass timer. When it runs out of sand, some of your life is taken away. If you find one of

the hidden hourglass timers, however, your time can be restored.

A sense of role-playing has also been added to the game. Your character can buy better shields to deflect enemy attacks, boots to help him run faster and jump higher, and armor that weakens the damage of enemies' attacks in case an offensive onslaught cannot be stopped. There is even a magic shop available for the purchase of magical spells. In the taverns that lie scattered through the kingdom, rumors can be obtained - for a suitable price, of course. The only items not available for sale are swords. These items can only be found, most often protected by powerful creatures. Each of these protecting creatures is unique and has a special weak spot by which it can be killed quickly.

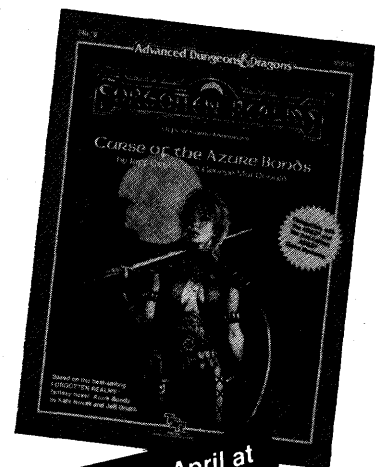
This game is one of SEGA's classic products. It involves arcade and strategy play, and even (for the first time in SEGA's home-system history) role-playing action. These elements combine to make *Wonder Boy in Monster Land* a truly original and enjoyable game. SEGA users will want to be sure to get this game. The only drawback to *Wonder Boy in Monster Land* is that once you die, you must restart from the beginning of the game, walking through the kingdom again and again and again, which can get boring. Overall, SEGA has done an excellent job.

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TSR introduces the module, *Curse of the Azure Bonds* based on the nationwide bookstore best-selling novel, *Curse of the Azure Bonds*.

Player-characters wake up to find bizarre magical sigils etched upon their arms. Far from a blessing, the azure-hued marks bind their destiny, and the player-characters must work their way through a wild adventure to get rid of their cause.

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News and new products

Absolute Entertainment

251 Rock Road
Glen Rock NJ 07452
(201) 652-1227

For MS-DOS gamers, Absolute has released *Crossbow*, a graphic arcade adventure. Already available for the Apple II and C64/128, this is a re-creation of the *Exidy* arcade adventure. *Crossbow* challenges players to lead a band of medieval travelers through many dangerous lands to reach a distant castle. The party is constantly threatened by predators and supernatural phenomena. Players must protect the travelers by shooting attackers before they can cause harm to the helpless party. *Crossbow* contains all of the graphic and game-play elements of the original arcade version, and requires 256K of RAM and CGA, HGC, or EGA graphics adapters. This is Absolute's first release for MS-DOS environments.

Activision, Inc.

(distributed by Mediagenic)
3885 Bohannon Drive
Menlo Park CA 94025
(415) 329-0800

One of many new releases from Activision is F-14 Tomcat, the Naval Weapons Fighter School simulation initially format-

ted for the C64/128 computer. This simulation re-creates the career of a naval fighter pilot from Whiting NAS in Florida as he moves to Miramar NAS in California. In *F-14 Tomcat*, real-life flight characteristics are accurately simulated to enable the game player to experience aerodynamic modeling, realistic acceleration and flight ceiling, true-to-form loops - even black-outs and redouts when the player pulls strong enough g-forces. *F-14 Tomcat* also features accurate weaponry, including a 20mm M61A1 Vulcan cannon, Amraam air-to-air missiles, and Sidewinder and Phoenix missiles. A radio intercept officer (RIO) keeps the player updated on the locations of enemies. The player also has the ability to track six independent targets simultaneously, while a realistic heads-up-display (HUD) shows altitude and airspeed. The price for this game is \$39.95.

The sequel to Activision's *The Last Ninja* has made its way to C64/128 monitors. *Last Ninja 2* continues the original story line after the defeat of Shogun Kunitoki, a samurai master who eliminated the entire brotherhood of the White Ninjitsu except one - the Last Ninja. Players are transported from the shogun's domain in Japan to the gritty, treacherous streets of Manhattan where they begin the quest to destroy Armakuni, the evil samurai master. To survive, players must use all their martial-arts skills to outrun, outfight, outmaneuver, and outwit the corrupt police force that protects the merciless villain.

A new fantasy role-playing adventure which Activision alleges is the next generation of such entertainments is also being released. Entitled *Prophecy I: The Fall of Trinadon*, this game features one of the largest weapon inventories of any role-playing game, as well as the most advanced combination of graphics and role-playing with joystick action. The adventure is set in CrissCross, a little village that hides from Krellane and the rule of the Gendorian Empire. Living in constant fear of discovery, the people of CrissCross dream of the day that a hero will appear and vanquish Krellane. But now, as their worst fears come true, the players (as residents of CrissCross) find their families and friends slaughtered by the powerful Empire. Alone and unarmed, *Prophecy I* players set out on a quest to fulfill the ancient prophecy and save the world from Krellane and his evil Empire.

Guided by lightning-fast reflexes and quick wits, players fight through numerous obstacles and wondrous creatures in search of vast treasures and clues to unlock the puzzle and defeat Krellane. Traveling through the enchanted forest, where every turn in the path is different, players can meet over 20 individually rendered monsters. Through interaction with nonplayer characters, players can locate weapons, obtain magic, and unearth clues needed to undo the dark secret of Castle Trinadon. The price for *Prophecy I*

is \$39.95 for MS-DOS computers.

Activision is also involved in releasing games for both the SEGA Master System and the Nintendo Entertainment System. For SEGA, *Galaxy Force*, *Cyborg Hunter*, *Rampage*, and *Bomber Raid* are being released. *Galaxy Force*, a Japanese smash-hit arcade game, is a futuristic space-fighter classic. Players select five different space scenes through which to fly, ranging from fiery seas of lava to meteor storms.

Cyborg Hunter takes place in the year 2242. Monstrous cyborgs, led by the evil Vipron, threaten to control the universe. As Paladin, the toughest bounty hunter in the galaxy, your mission is to gain access to Vipron's chambers and destroy him.

In *Rampage*, the player controls one of three nasty monsters - Ralph the Wolf, George the Ape, or Lizzie the Lizard - on a campaign of destruction. The player can crunch the concrete alone or team up with a friend to trash the town together. There are 50 cities to demolish.

Bomber Raid is an aerial combat game in which the player pilots a fighter bomber directly into enemy territory. The player will need full mastery of controls and weaponry to survive five dangerous missions filled with hundreds of screens of dogfight action.

The Nintendo Entertainment System offerings include *Three Stooges* and *Stealth Eagle*, which join Activision's *Predator* and *Ghostbusters* cartridge games. *Three Stooges* is a breakthrough comedy hit that stars TV and movie legends Curly, Larry, and Moe. Choose from among 10 subgames and relive scenes from your favorite "Three Stooges" episodes.

Stealth Eagle is a flight simulation that takes its player into the skies to confront dangerous enemy aircraft in fast, arcade-style action. The player can take on a computer-controlled enemy fleet or battle a second player in an all-out dogfight.

Predator is an adaptation of the hit 20th Century-Fox film starring Arnold Schwarzenegger. The player assumes the role of the leader of an elite military rescue team. The mission is to battle through the deep jungles of South America, past militant guerillas, to rescue U.S. diplomats from a terrorist stronghold. Players must avoid the relentless tracking of the alien predator that eventually leads to a final confrontation. Another Nintendo hit for Activision is their previously released *Ghostbusters*, wherein players build a franchise and avert a ghostly disaster brewing in New York City.

New World Computing, Inc.

14922 Calvert Street
Van Nuys CA 91411
(818) 785-0401
(818) 785-0519 (tech support)

New World has finally released the long-awaited *Might and Magic II: Gates to Another World*. This is the sequel to the smash hit and Beastie Award winner, *Might and Magic I: Secret of the Inner*

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there's fighting in the arena against ill-tempered orcs or raging minotaurs like the one you see above (which incidentally is an actual IBM® screen display). Other activities include maze-running, lock-picking, archery, and horse-back-riding.



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STRATEGIC SIMULATIONS, INC.

Sanctum. Released for the Apple II computer family, *Gates to Another World* challenges players to solve an elaborate adventure game in which cunning, might, and intelligence are the keys to survival.

You'll enter the mysterious world of Cron and explore a doomed land. Rumors abound of a terrible destruction to occur as the land approaches its millennium. As you and your party travel across Cron, utilizing the largest 3-D graphics window of any current fantasy role-playing game, the truth of the rumors comes out, and you must find and vanquish their source. To accomplish this, you and your party of as many as eight characters (including NPC hirelings) must explore the more than 60 different areas which make up Cron while seeking clues to aid in your task. There are over 250 monsters, more than 250 powerful weapons, 96 devastating spells, an advanced combat system, and hundreds of strengthening and beneficial quests. The price for this game is \$49.95. A version for MS-DOS and compatible machines is also available, as is a C64/128 version.

Sir-Tech Software

P.O. Box 245
Charlestown Ogdensburg Mall
Ogdensburg NY 13669
(315) 393-6633

Sir-Tech Software sources have told us that the company is reworking their Macintosh version of *Wizardry I*. Enhancements will include better graphics and some animation. Maze walls will now appear as bricked instead of only lined. The scenario is currently being beta tested. Also this year, Sir-Tech plans to release *wizardry II* for the Macintosh.

Sir-Tech Software is also the recipient of a 1988 *Computer Entertainer* Award of Excellence. The company's fantasy role-playing game, *Wizardry IV: The Return of Werdna*, was given this award in the Apple II game category. *Computer Entertainer* is a monthly newsletter published in Van Nuys, Calif. It provides critical commentary and analysis of computer products on the market.

'We're extremely pleased,' said Sir-Tech vice president, Robert Sirotek, "but we knew this *Wizardry* sequel was worthy of distinction." Sirotek estimates the number of requests for *Wizardry IV* to be coming in at the rate of 25 calls per hour, prompting the company to install three new lines to handle the switchboard overload. Sir-Tech presented its first *Wizardry* scenario, *Proving Grounds of the Mad Overlord*, in 1981 at the Boston AppleFest.

Sir-Tech's game hint hot line is (315) 393-6633. The hint service runs from 12 noon to 6 P.M. on weekends and from 4 P.M. to 8 P.M. on weekdays.

Clue corner

The Bard's Tale (Electronic Arts)

On the third level of Harkyn's Castle [C64/128 version, first adventure], there is a very large source of experience points. It can be reached by casting conjuror spell APAR; North 5, East 12, Up 2, after taking the entry stairs. However, your characters must be of at least 9th or 19th level, and be able to utilize mind blade (sorcerer spell MIBL) and restoration (magician spell REST). One warning: The price for this experience may be high!

Peter Thompson
Brandt, South Dakota

The Bard's Tale III (Electronic Arts)

If the [Apple-version boot] disk is CATA-logged, the files are revealed on-screen. One of these files is a binary file titled "YUMMY." This file allegedly is a display of one of the creators of this game getting "axed" off the development team. To display this file, do the following:

1. Get into ProDOS.
2. Insert *The Bard's Tale III* boot disk.
3. Type in "BLOAD YUMMY?"

Now you'll see the picture of the team member being removed from the team. This picture can also be found on the boot disk of the C64/128 version of this game.

Chris Carman
Oxford, Ohio

Deja Vu (Mindscape)

To win at the slot machines, the pattern is to operate a quarter on the left machine (you will lose), then operate a quarter on the right machine (you will lose again), then operate on the right slot machine again (and you will win a lot of money); this pattern usually works. Try this combination: 626 Auburn Road. The combination to the safe is 33-24-36. To find out what the note pad (in the mansion) said, operate the pencil on the note pad. Shoot doors to open them. Hit a certain wine bottle in the wine rack to open the secret door.

Zachary M. Davis
Eugene, Oregon

Might and Magic I (New World Comp.)

If you are frustrated by constantly getting lost in the desert, the exiled Lord Kilburn has the map that you need. And as for that key you've been looking for, the canine has it. He can be found in the Minotaur's Stronghold.

Robert Isaacson
Sudbury, Massachusetts

At B1 4,7 lies a hidden treasure. Also, excessive donation to temples results in extremely powerful protection spells being cast on your party. Lastly, don't accept the offer of the dying wizard, as you will gain his ring anyway.

Bruce Norman
Kingston, Ontario

Moebius (Origin)

Use your sword to chop down vegetation, then sharpen it with a whetstone.

Before you fight an Evil Monk or an Overlord, do Bare Hands. Don't talk to a prisoner with your sword Equipped. Never hit a corpse! Have a Monk Follow you to a shrine after you kill the Evil Monk. Fireballs can only be used in shrines. Use the soil sample for Teleport, the Tiger Teeth for Ventriloquism, and the Fish Scales from the Astronomer for Invisibility.

Chris Carmen
Oxford, Ohio

Sub Battle Simulator (Epyx)

For those who are addicted to this World War II submarine simulation and would like a couple of wartime engagement hints, the following advice comes directly from the experience of Gordon Walton, the developer of the game. "To sink all of the ships, engage the armed escorts first. All other ships are lightly armed, and most are slower than your top speed, so surface and use your deck gun after the escorts are taken out."

On those occasions when you must escape the sonar pings of pursuing destroyers, Gordon recommends you keep your sub's profile as small as possible and steer away from the circle the enemy ship is making overhead. Remember: The enemy's depth charges are set to explode at the depth indicated by their last sonar fix on you.

Times of Lore (Origin)

To purchase the Magic Axe, go to the town of Lankwell and enter the building in the NNW corner. If no one is home, wait for someone to arrive. When you meet this person, choose the Speak command. He will offer to sell you the axe. This axe automatically returns to your hand after each use (unlike the dagger, which you must retrieve after each use). This axe makes combat much easier and faster.

Dave Gentzler
Thomasville, Pennsylvania

Ultima V (Origin)

You must use the Amulet to find the entrance to dungeon Doom.

Hartley, Patricia, and Kirk Lesser

We'd like to remind everyone to wear their reviewers' hats. The 1989 DRAGON® Magazine Beastie Awards for the finest game software will be upon us in no time. No, it is not too early to start voting. As a matter of fact, we've seen at least three games that easily vie for the top honors. To get involved in the voting, simply write your name, address, the game for which you are voting, and the system upon which you played the game on a postcard and mail it to:

The Beastie Awards
c/o Hartley & Patricia Lesser
179 Pebble Place
San Ramon CA 94583

Until next issue, game on!

Ω



Here's What's In Store For you!

Since TSR's first FORGOTTEN REALMS® novel hit the stands in late 1987, it and three other books in the line have already sold more copies than the first DRAGONLANCE® novel sold in its first year! And the momentum is just beginning to build.

The Icewind Dale Trilogy

Icewind Dale is the setting for the trilogy R.A. Salvatore started with his best seller *The Crystal Shard*. Salvatore's second novel, *Streams of Silver* follows the adventures of the main characters as they search for Bruenor the dwarf's birthplace, the legendary Mithral Hall. Packed with the same hard-hitting action as its predecessor, this book is destined to become the next best seller in the FORGOTTEN REALMS novel series.

The Moonshae Trilogy

The heroes of *Darkwalker on Moonshae* and *Black Wizards* are also back in Doug Niles' third book, *Darkwell*, the thrilling conclusion to the Moonshae Trilogy.

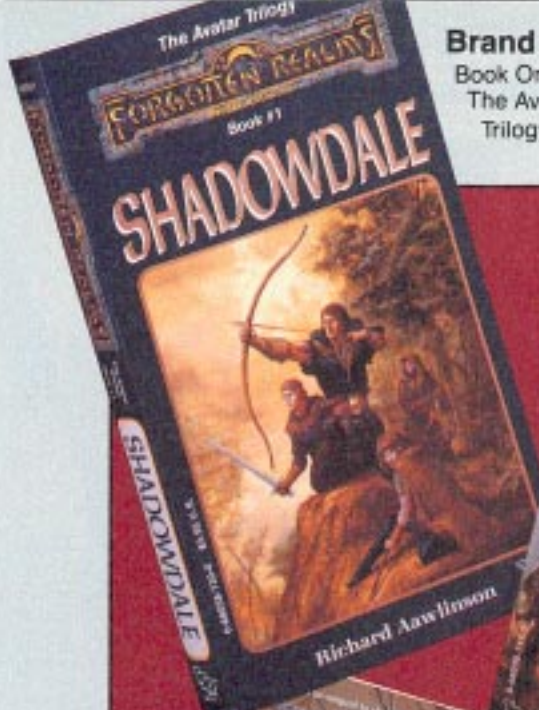
The Avatar Trilogy

New to the stands this year, Richard Awlinton's Avatar Trilogy takes a mismatched quartet from their hometown of Shadowdale to Tantras and finally to Waterdeep, the largest city of the Forgotten Realms.

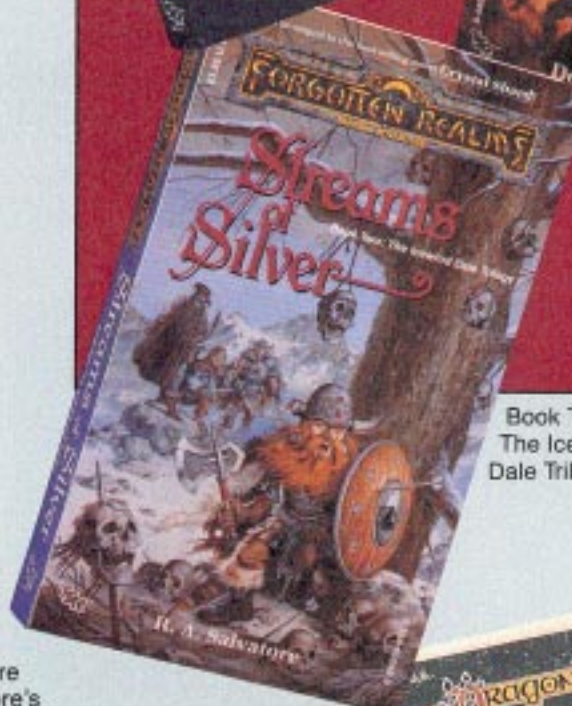
Millions of readers, like you, can't wait to see what's in store in the next exciting FORGOTTEN REALMS novel. Be sure to pick up your copies of these new releases today. FORGOTTEN REALMS novels can be found at your local book store or hobby shop.

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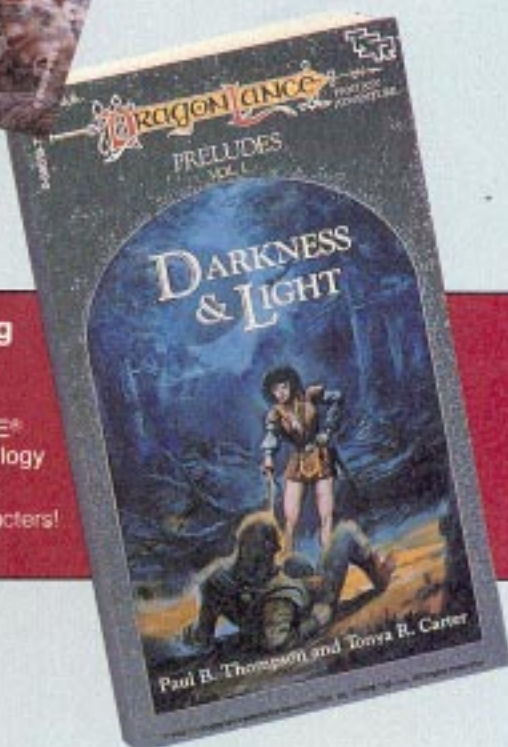
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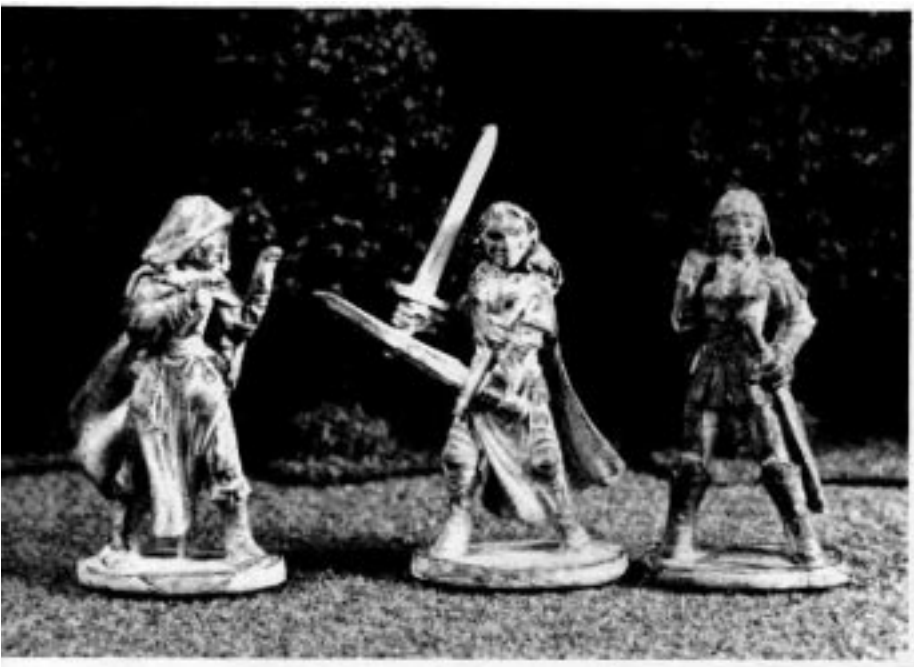
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miniatures: Two opponents to
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This month, we bid a brief good-bye to our discussion of the methods used in painting miniatures, and instead we enter new territory. When this column was started in issue #135, one area of coverage we considered was a "combat zone," in which readers could see how gamers used their figures in miniatures battles and how painting and scenery-placement techniques were so used. During the last few months, I have received many letters from readers requesting that we do more feature articles on science-fiction games, with many asking for BATTLETECH® game articles or painting techniques.

Thus, this month we present a short but epic battle for those who wish to see the dramatic ways in which other gamers use their miniatures. Our premier action, the Battle for Headquarters Hill, was run by the gaming club at my hobby, shop. "Battle Zone" will appear at the end of this column when a good battle is available. In some cases, material in the review part of this column may turn up in "Battle Zone" as well.

Reviews

Miniature-figure ratings

*	Poor
**	Below average
***	Average
****	Above average
*****	Excellent

This month, the column features several multiple-figure kits. These kits make my gamer's heart and wallet happy; purchasing numerous figures in one set is usually cheaper than buying the figures individually. Another advantage is that you get all the figures you need in one fell swoop, rather than making several trips but missing one elusive figure.

Ral Partha Enterprises, Inc.

5938 Carthage Court
Cincinnati OH 45212

TOG 02-959: Female Adventurers ****

One of the most popular settings in science fiction is that of an interstellar empire grown old and arrogant. FASA used this theme in a new series of science-fiction games, creating a Terran-based interstellar government modeled on the Roman Empire. The domineering and imperialistic TOG enjoys such old sports favorites as chariot racing, gladiatorial combat, and rebel hunting. The rebels, of course, want to unseat the empire and free the galaxy.

This figure pack presents three women from the TOG™/RENEGADE LEGION™ universe in various poses. There is no specification as to whether their loyalties lie with the government or the rebels. One female is wearing the pleated skirt and shoulder epaulets usually seen in movies about the Roman legions. Her jerkin appears to be of leather or malleable metal, as her ribs can be faintly seen, and it is joined with detailed leather straps. She carries a long sword on her left hip and a long knife in a sheath behind her, on a belt near a water flask. The figure wears high boots with knee protectors. The face on the figure is plain but well detailed.

The second female adventurer displays no visible weapon. Her hands are held in a martial-arts defensive posture, one hand in front of her face and the other hand curved at shoulder height. She is dressed in a cape and hood, and her shirt is belted at the waist and split from the upper hip along the leg. She is wearing calf-high boots with either fringe or turned-over tops. Close examination also shows some sort of beads hanging from her belt. Her face has a look of concentration and is less plain than that of the previous figure.

The third figure is obviously a proficient fighter. She is carrying two swords, one held pointing up and the other ready for defense. She dressed in flexible plate

armor from foot to waist, with a chain-mail shirt, probably with leather or light plate underneath. She also wears a long belted tunic with a cape behind her.

These figures are well done and have the extra value of being usable not only in the TOG/RENEGADE LEGION games, but in any role-playing games in which women without sci-fi weapons or modern dress can be used. This pack costs \$3.50.

ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®
miniatures

11-404 UMBER HULK ****

11-405 OGRE MAGE ****1/2

This is not the first time that official AD&D® figures have been introduced in the hobby marketplace, but it is the first time they have been done by Ral Partha. I anxiously awaited these figures and can now pass my impressions on to you.

The umber hulk is an impressive figure, one that dungeon parties are not going to be happy to see. The figure is slightly hunched over but is still an imposing 13/4" tall and 1" wide at the shoulders. It has the short, stubby hands and feet shown in the *Monster Manual*, and it has claws suited for digging. The monster's body plates overlap and have the surface appearance of stone walls and rocks. The armored spine also blends in well with the figure.

Best of all is the head, which measures 7/8" from the front of its mandibles to the back of the monster's head. The small tusks and rows of sharp teeth should convince any PC party that it is in the wrong place at the wrong time. The only failing that I can see with this miniature concerns the eyes located beside the mandibles, on which some detail is lost after the figure is primed. Use care, as the engraved lines are very fine and fill easily and quickly with paint. The stand on this figure is thick and looks like the engraved, inlaid stone of a dungeon floor.

The ogre mage is a real gem for those who play *Oriental Adventures* or FGU's BUSHIDO™ game. The figure stands 1 1/2" tall with bent knees, and it is well proportioned. This figure deviates from the illustration in the *Monster Manual* but looks that much the better for it. The figure has sandals, and its body is covered by a loose, belted robe. The figure also wears quilt-and-metal armor on its arms with knuckle protectors on the hands, over each of which appears to be a bracelet or bracer.

The ogre mage's face has a hostile look, with a jutting chin and protruding brows. The horns on his head and the small tusks in his jaws are easily seen but do not detract from the miniature. To cap it off is his long, unruly hair, running straight back from his head to fall short of midway down his back.

Best of all, this figure has options at no additional cost. The figure has an open right hand, and his left arm ends at the wrist. Into his right hand you can place a katana big enough to slice through a horse, or you can leave the hand open to

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11-405

OGRE MAGE

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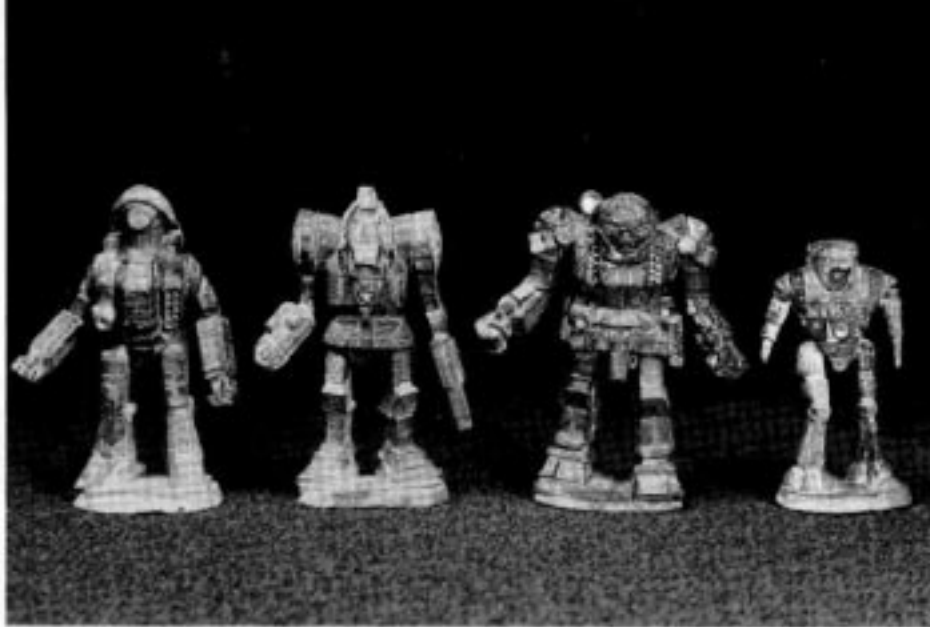
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BATTLETECH® Regimental Command Lance: Now, *this* is armor!

simulate a spell-casting pose. Of two replacement left hands, one clutches a knife the size of a short sword, and the other holds a damsel in distress.

These figures are definitely worth grabbing, as there are no other figures of these kinds available. The only other umber hulk I have seen looks like a pet on a leash, and the only other ogre mage looks jolly in comparison with this one. Get these figures and enjoy making it rough on your players' parties. The retail price for these figures is \$3.50 per package.

RP 10-807 BATTLETECH® Regimental Command Lance

Figures **** 1/2

Lance *** 1/2

Modern military organizations have a command element built into each major unit. It is the duty of this unit to designate attack areas, direct engagements, perform scouting, and do a hundred other things not done by direct-combat units. Command units, while important today, are even more important in the future, in which battles may not even take place

on your own world.

Ral Partha has long had BATTLETECH figures available in single packs, and its present policy of issuing BattleMechs organized into lances (the basic military units of the BATTLETECH game) makes it easier for gamers to get individual 'Mechs which work well together.

This pack is alleged to be a generic command lance and includes 'Mechs having scout, command, intelligence, and reserve-firepower abilities. Serving as a scout is a very well done Ostscout model. The Ostscout has a long game-given history of scouting and is in fact probably the best of all scout 'Mechs, but its firepower is too low. On a restricted gaming field, this 'Mech can become shredded wheat in a hurry, but its speed and common availability make it good for a campaign or large-area game.

Communications and command are taken care of by the Cyclops. This 90-ton 'Mech can serve as satellite data link, radio link, and sophisticated battle computer; it can direct a 'Mech regiment easily. The

'Mech's "head" is a vulnerable spot, and the model has the "helmet" added by many of the pilots of this machine. The communications add-on is also well detailed, as are the weapons.

The Atlas is presented for the back-up firepower (and panic) it can provide. The model portrays the aura of power of this machine, and the head almost seems to have a death-head leer. The weapons show clearly. I have a healthy respect for the modeling here. When painted, some of the lines appear to be flexed (at the elbows especially), giving a powerful illusion of action to this figure.

The single potential fly in this ointment is presence of the Zeus as the attached assault 'Mech. When I saw this figure, something bothered me. I went back to a copy of the *BATTLETECH Technical Read-out 3025*, in which the Zeus is noted as belonging to only the Lyran Commonwealth. On the positive side, the figure looks exactly like the line drawing in the book, only much more detailed.

This is a good set to own. When you buy the lance sets, you save about \$.50 over the individual figure prices and get a set of hex bases as well. The hex bases look nice and do much to protect your figures by making the 'Mechs harder to knock over. This set costs \$18.00 retail.

FORGOTTEN REALMS™ miniatures **** 1/2
RP 10-550 Heroes

As the FORGOTTEN REALMS' setting grows in popularity among AD&D game players, there is an ever-growing number of support products that goes with it. Among these products are paperback novels set in the Realms, which can fuel

FORGOTTEN REALMS™
miniatures: Crossing swords
with Tristan and Drizt.



rumors, build legends, and otherwise add depth to the world. Gamers can also build campaigns based on these books – but to do that, you need figures!

This set contains 10 different heroes from four of the FORGOTTEN REALMS novels presently on the market. These heroes appear to have almost been selected at random and include seven males, two females, and a lizard-like being named Dragonbait. The males include an elf and a dwarf.

To review this set, I grabbed my FORGOTTEN REALMS paperbacks and checked the cover art against the figures represented in the pack. Ral Partha has done its regular quality work. Alias and Dragonbait match their book-cover art (from *Azure Bonds*) almost perfectly, the only differences being in sword positioning. Alias's right arm has some raised spots and swirls from her elbow to her wrist. My magnifier did not show the area well, but if you have a 5x or better magnifier and a 10-0 brush, you could probably paint the tattoo. Alias does appear to be missing her forearm bracelets.

Tristan and Robyn also fared well in the transition. These two major characters from the Moonshae Trilogy are accurate down to the belt buckles. The detail on Robyn's cloak and druid's cape comes out clearly. The character who did not fare well was poor Newt, the little fairie dragon who accompanies Robyn. Somewhere along the line, some of Newt's body detail was lost, and he almost looks like a bird on Robyn's hand.

The rest of the figures were impossible to judge by the book covers. All of the figures are done with a great deal of quali-

ty workmanship and attention to detail. The totem carried by Thunderstorm shows detail right down to the edge of the feathers, and is clear at that. The capes, cloaks, and robes worn by all show the transition between cloth and edging, be it animal fur or a different fabric. The characters Magister, Elminster, Drizt, Wulfgar, and Bruenor are in action poses, some with wind-blown hair, and look eager for action. All of the figures are clearly shown on the back of the box in full color. With care, you should have no trouble painting these figures accurately.

This set is highly recommended for its collectors' and display values, and for use with your AD&D® game campaigns. All the figures may be used in non-Realms campaigns. At \$15.00 per box, these figures are not significantly more expensive than other single-packaged figures. My only request is that there be another set of FORGOTTEN REALMS figures, as some of my favorites are missing.

This pack, and Ral Partha's other figures, are also available from: Minifigs, 1/5 Graham Road, Southampton, England SO2 0AX; RAFM, 20 Park Hill Road East, Cambridge, Ontario, Canada N1R 1P2; and Jeux Descartes, 5, Rue De La Baume, 75008, Paris, France.

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WARHAMMER™ SIEGE:

Creative ways to handle uninvited guests.

GWS 0015 WARHAMMER™ SIEGE * * * * 1/2

Fantasy and historical miniature rules have many similarities, among them the lack of an effective and fairly accurate way to attack and defend castle and strongholds. There have been weak attempts at making rules for siege weapons effective, but these were poorly done if done at all.

Enter WARHAMMER™ SIEGE! I held off for a long time on reviewing this product, as when I first looked through it it seemed to focus primarily on Games Workshop's Mighty Fortress [see "Through the Looking Glass" in issue #140], with no attempt made to deal with other types of castles. But I admit that I was wrong. Upon close

FORGOTTEN REALMS™ miniatures:
Magister and Elminster
prepare their spells.



FORGOTTEN REALMS™ miniatures:
An odd couple –
Dragonbait and Bruenor.

examination, I found much to recommend this rules book.

WARHAMMER SIEGE has the first truly effective set of rules that I have ever seen for the use of miners, sappers, or engineers. These individuals were important members of almost any siege occurring in the Middle Ages, and they should be an important part of any fantasy siege. It was the job of these men to dig long tunnels under the walls of an enemy castle and then cause these tunnels to collapse, which often did severe damage to buildings and walls above them. These men were also responsible for the long zig-zag trenches which provided the cover for men attacking the castle. In the castle's defense, these men were responsible for preventing these very same deeds, and they had to protect any breaches in the castle's walls.

WARHAMMER SIEGE also covers such things as the use of boiling oil, hot water, and the like for discouraging unwanted house guests using ladders or grapples. It tells you how to build siege weapons on the field and how to place them. Many people nowadays assume that medieval armies carried siege weapons with them, but these rules point out the work that went into building these engines of destruction (with game mechanics as well). The rules are workable and even fun.

The book's rules make use of hidden

movement, which for many gamers will be the first "blind" game they have played. When you play blind, you use maps to move your troops around, and you do not know what your enemy is doing till you stumble over him. The mapping instructions can be applied to any castle or fortress and game area, not just the ones in the book. There is even a section on magic in sieges.

In addition to the medieval/fantasy section, you receive a bonus section allowing you to do science-fiction game sieges. The mapping remains much the same, and with a little digging into rules, you can fight sieges with figures from almost any of the science-fiction sets made by other game companies.

The biggest simple benefit of this rules set is that it can be used with many different miniatures systems, though it was designed to go with the WARHAMMER games. I have seen it used with three different game systems without major difficulty. I have even seen it converted from use as a system for 25mm figures to one for 5mm figures.

There are two minor problems with this rules set. First, Games Workshop has once again turned a good, viable set of rules into a commercial message. You have to dig below this message to get at the quality in the system. The other disadvantage is that the binding on this book is fairly

fragile. If you remove the rules summary and templates, you are almost guaranteed to have a mess of loose pages as a result. I recommend that you photocopy the summary and templates, transfer them to cardboard or commercial counters, and save the ones in the book for use as masters to replace missing or damaged chits.

WARHAMMER SIEGE is a good introduction to medieval-style historical and fantasy gaming with little extra investment. I highly recommend these rules, which are £10.99 in the U.K. and \$29.95 in the U.S.

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(figures distributed by West End Games)

Lucasfilm's STAR WARS® miniatures
WE 40301 Heroes of the Rebellion ****

One of the most popular movies of all times, *Star Wars*, created a kind of fan cult all its own. With the introduction of West End Games' STAR WARS®: The RPG several years ago, there has been a need for figures to go with the game. The figures are now out and are made by Grenadier Models, which has a long history of quality miniature manufacturing. This set is billed as a collectors' set and is a prize for any one who is a *Star Wars* fan.

The set consists of 10 figures, two of which are generic Rebel soldiers in different poses. One soldier has a laser pistol at the ready, and the other appears to be waiting, with his hand by a pistol in his hip holster. The armed soldier has extra pockets in his pants, a power pack or carrying pack on his back, and extra gear. The waiting soldier has different pants, no belt, and no pack. He could easily pass as an officer. An X-wing pilot is included in the set that has a blaster drawn and is running. This figure has an air pack, ribbed suit, and communications helmet; the air and communications line on the suit is also evident and fairly accessible for painting.

The main draws of the sets are the actual *Star Wars* personalities. Included in this set are R2-D2, C-3PO, Luke Skywalker, Princess Leia Organa, Han Solo, Chewbacca, and Obi-Wan Kenobi. Each is accurately done with regards to facial features, with more than one being an exact match with pictures of the characters. The sizes are correct, as C-3PO's outstretched arm can rest his hand directly on top of R2-D2. Chewbacca is almost exactly one head taller than Han Solo. The only figure that looks slightly off is Princess Leia, who looks too thin and straight compared with the others. The crossbow weapon that Chewbacca carries has some molding flash lines that are easily fixed.

The packaging has good and bad points. Only one small color photo appears on the front of the box; if you want to find the difference between the color of Chewy's fur and that of his cartridge belt, you will

The Republic of Darokin

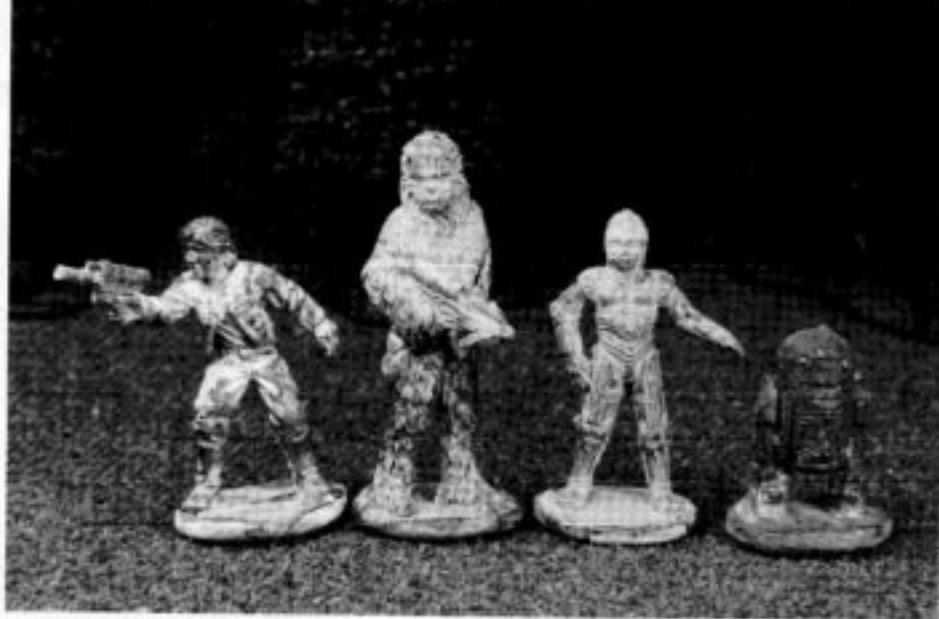
The newest in TSR's popular line of Gazetteer's, this sourcebook is to land-based merchants what *The Minrothab Gullbs* (November 1988) is to sea merchants. Provides all the information you need for caravan-building and other profiteering ventures. Includes a full-color map that is scaled to fit with maps from the other Gazetteers.

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either have to look very closely or get another source. The color detailing to go with C-3P0 and R2-D2 is also not clear, and Obi-Wan's light saber, robe, and clothes are not shown. On the good side, each of the figures included in the set has a set of stats included so you can immediately use them in the STAR WARS game without having to guess at their abilities. As a miniaturist, I would rather have a painting and color guide, though. A pack consisting only of Rebel soldiers would be good, too.

I recommend this set, especially for those people who collect *Star Wars* memorabilia or are frequent players of the role-playing game. The retail price of \$10.00 per set comes to a dollar per figure, somewhat cheaper than normal industry prices. Do be careful if any of your figures sit unevenly on their bases; one figure broke when we tried to straighten it.

These figures are available in the U.S. through West End Games, RD 3 Box 2345, Honesdale PA 18431.



STAR WARS® Heroes of the Rebellion: No introductions necessary.

The Battle for Headquarters Hill

The Battle for Headquarters Hill was a miniatures battle in a BATTLETECH campaign by the Gamemaster's Guild of Waukegan. In this campaign, each player runs one or more lances in a mercenary BattleMech unit which he has designed himself. These 'Mechs may be either stock or modified according to a design and point sheet.

The judges for the campaign had designed a series of contracts for each mercenary unit. These contracts were from unspecified Houses in the campaign universe and gave the merc units chores that would not be practical for House units, such as situations involving direct confrontations with other Houses.

In this month's battle, contract #1 specified that the unit concerned was to destroy an HQ unit and a bunker located in a forest on a tiny unnamed planet. The opponent's strength was unknown but could consist of up to two lances. Unfortunately, the maximum landing capacity available to the unit drawing this contract was only six 'Mechs. Stealth was advised, as there was no chance of reinforcements and only a maximum of 10 turns could be used before the dropship would have to leave. The reward for success was high.

Contract #2 specified that the HQ was to be protected at all costs, with minimal or no damage to the HQ. Defense of this area would be difficult, but there were woods and hills around the bunker to help conceal it. The attack could come from any direction but the east, which was blocked by impassable cliffs and debris. The defenders could use any 'Mechs available to them for defense of this vital objective.

There were several unique aspects about this battle. For one, no one knew that the HQ itself was a space-monitoring

station that gave the defending House a substantial edge in knowing when an attack was coming – hence, the disparity in force sizes. For another, the opposing players were husband and wife: Benjamin and Crystal Olliff. These two players were the first to draw out of the 12 available contracts, and they managed to draw the two that would pit them against each other. Both are also beginning players, so the battle was more intense than usual.

The battleground

The board was set up on a 6' X 8' table using Geo-Hex scenery. The table was level one, and the HQ was placed on top of a five-level forested hill. The eastern edge of the board was considered to be a sheer cliff. The northeast corner had four sections of forests ranging from medium to thick. The northern plains had little or no cover except for occasional patches of woods. The western edge had a four-level forested hill and woods. A one-level-deep lake was placed in the center of the table. Woods and hills covered part of the southern edge of the board.

The forces

The forces used in this battle are given in the accompanying table. If you are interested in trying this battle for yourself, the Ral Partha stock numbers are included for your convenience.

The battle

The action in the battle is taken directly from the battle reports written by Benjamin and Crystal Olliff. Players in our campaign keep battle logs so that damage is recorded. Other members of the club can get the feel of the battle by reading the reports, even if they were not there.

Crystal: At the start of the battle, "The Sting" was located in the woods the west of the base and northwest of the lake. Janice's "Butterfly" was stationed on the hill southwest of the base in a grove of trees. The "Lone Wolf" was west of the base, behind the hill near the lake. "Salamander" acted as lookout to the north, hiding in the woods on the first elevation of the base's hill. "Satan" had the watch toward the south, in the woods at the southern base of the hill. Everyone else

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wandered around on the headquarters hill, battle-ready. No one was sure from which direction the attack would come, except that it could not come from the east. It was thought that the west would be the most likely direction – but the enemy surprised us by coming from the north.

Benjamin: I chose my six biggest Bums for this mission, since the contract allowed for only six. One group of three 'Mechs was designated for support fire: "Notredame," "Julius Caesar," and "Long Arm." The second group consisted of "William Tell," "Outlaw," and "Felix." This group had my long-range missiles.

It was reported that the westward approach was the easiest, but that the southern and northern approaches were also available. Because the west was the easiest, I figured it would be the most heavily guarded, so I chose to approach from the north. The south involved too long a march, and there was a grove of trees in the north close to the base of the hill on which rested our objective, the headquarters.

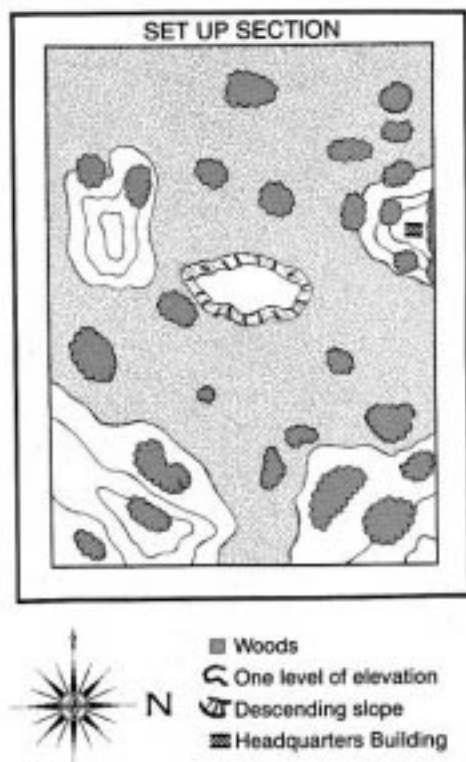
Crystal: Stardust spotted the enemy first and informed "Windsong," who recalled the lookouts. The lookouts were still going to keep watch, only closer to base. If the enemy attacked from more than one direction, the scouts would not be so far away that help could not reach them quickly.

Stardust was told to torch the woods as soon as the enemy entered them, but either the order was misunderstood or she got trigger happy and jumped the gun. Stardust rushed into a position to flame the woods as soon as the enemy was reported. This would have been fine except that she now happened to be out in the open.

Benjamin: As soon as my Bums were in range, we opened fire. Because Mike and Josie were directly behind the trees, I (Benjamin Bonington) was the only one in my group with a clear shot. I managed to blow several holes in the hill around the headquarters as well as putting 5 points of damage on the building itself. My other group spotted a Firestarter. You do not see these often, but since we luckily have one of our own, we know what they can do. Betty ordered an all-out attack, and she, Frank, and Gaius opened up with all the weapons they could use without overheating. Frank missed with his LRM 15s – better luck next time. Betty fired her AC-20 and two of her medium lasers at the Firestarter; only one medium laser hit for 5 points to the left torso. Gaius let loose with his AC-10. He got a lucky shot to the head – a critical, causing the head to explode and kill both 'Mech and pilot.

Crystal: Before poor Stardust turned into particles, she managed to set the woods on fire in front of the Archer, Der-

BATTLE FOR HEADQUARTER HILL



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The Battle for Headquarters Hill: Forces

"Benjamin's Bums" (Benjamin Olliff)—Attacking

Stock No.	Mech type	Vehicle name	PC Pilot
20-849	Centurion	"Julius Caesar"	Gaius Philippus
20-854	Hunchback	"Notredame"	Betty Walton
20-876	Dervish	"Outlaw"	Josie Wales
20-887	Trebuchet	"Long Arm"	Frank Pettijohn
20-852	Catapult	"Felix"	Mike Miles
20-842	Archer	"William Tell"	Benjamin Bonington

"Hellcats" (Crystal Olliff) – Defending

Stock No.	Mech type	Vehicle name	PC Pilot
20-832	Wasp	"The Sting"	Helen Hawkings
20-832	Wasp	"Butterfly"	Janice "Ail" Johnson
20-865	Commando	"Lone Wolf"	Mary Little Eagle
20-850	Firestarter	"Salamander"	Stardust
20-853	Panther	"Blackie"	Kathy Oden
20-885	Hermes II	"Satan"	"Frenchie" LaRoug
20-854	Hunchback	"Ugly"	Millie Phillips
20-837	Wolverine	"Little Death"	Cantus Marshall
20-855	Ostosol	"Dirty Harry"	Jo Holland
20-888	Grasshopper	"Death Dealer"	Martha "Hotlips" Harrison
20-846	Goliath	"Big Death"	Ariel Melody "Windsong" Marshall

vish, and Catapult. This ensured that to get closer, they would have to move out in the open. My "Big Death" opened up on the Hunchback that ordered fire on Stardust; both the PPC and LRM-10 hit, doing 10 points to its right torso and 8 points to its left leg. Jo's "Dirty Harry" fired both of its large lasers but only did 8 points to the Hunchback's left arm. Cantus in "Little Death" fired her AC-5, doing 5 points to the Hunchback's right arm.

Benjamin: Betty and I ordered the Bums to advance 3 hexes, which put Betty's group in light cover in the woods. I realized that my bunch would be out in the open, but then everyone would have a clear shot at the bunker. My group opened up with our LRMs, but I was the only one to score a hit for another 5 points. Betty's group fired on the Wolverine. "Notredame" and "Long Arm" both put 5 points each on it, Betty to the right leg and Frank to the left leg. Then we moved back 3 hexes to make the range longer for the enemy but still keep us in fair range of the headquarters.

Crystal: Cantus, Millie, the bunker, and I all fired on the Archer. Millie's "Ugly" put 20 points on the right torso with its AC-20. Cantus did 5 points to the center torso with her AC-5. Jo and Kathy fired on the Hunchback but only Jo hit it; "Dirty Harry's" large lasers did 8 points to the left torso and 8 points to the center torso.

During the next round of firing from my Hellcats, the bunker and I were the only ones to hit the Archer, though Millie tried. The bunker's AC-5 put 5 points into the Archer's left leg. My "Big Death" did 10 points to its left torso with my PPC, and 5 points in the left arm and 5 points into the left leg with the LRM-10. After Martha's "Death Dealer" tried three times to set fire to the woods in which the enemy Hunchback, Centurian, and Trebuchet were hiding, Cantus managed to do the job. Jo's "Dirty Harry" hit the Hunchback with large lasers for 8 points to its right arm and 8 points to its center torso.

Benjamin: I had been laughing because the defenders included a couple of people who could not hit the broad side of a barn. Looks like the last laugh was on us, though. Only Gaius's "Julius Caesar" hit anything, doing 5 points to the Wolverine's left arm. I was beginning to get worried; not only was "William Tell" shot full of holes and my second-in-command hurting, but now both "Notredame" and "Julius Caesar" reported a loss of 5 heat sinks each. Could the enemy have gotten advance warning? I seem to also remember that he who runs away lives to fight another day!

Crystal: Everyone moved three hexes into the open, because we could sense that the enemy's morale was failing. Cantus missed the Archer, but the bunker, Millie, and I hit it. The bunker crew and Millie's medium laser each slapped 5 points of damage on the left arm. My PPC made a 10-point hole in the Archer's left torso,



FASA's BATTLETECH® game: Waiting for action at Headquarters Hill.

while my LRM-10s did 5 points to the right torso and 1 to the left leg. Martha and Jo both fired on the Trebuchet because there was too much smoke to see the other two targets. "Dirty Harry's" two large lasers did 8 points to the center torso and 8 to the left arm; Martha's large laser put 8 points into the right leg. The game then ended. Our revenge for Stardust's death would have to wait until another day.

Initiative rolls

Turns 1, 2, 4 and 5: Bums had initiative.

Turn 3: Hellcats had initiative.

Turn 5: Game ended.

Summary

Six other battles were fought by our gaming club on the same day this one was. In addition to Stardust, six other

pilots died in combat during that first campaign weekend.

If you have battles that you would like to share, send them to me. Make sure that all the information included in this article is present, that any photographs and maps submitted are clear, and that your name and the names of those who participated in the battle are included. Please send a signed letter giving permission to use the battle in this column.

Further information on the Gamemaster's Guild is available. The Guild is located halfway between Milwaukee and Chicago in Waukegan, Ill. Just write to: Gamemaster's Guild of Waukegan, 1411 Washington, Waukegan IL 60085. The telephone number is (312) 336-0790. You can reach me at that same address. Until next month!



Stardust memories: A direct hit at Headquarters Hill.





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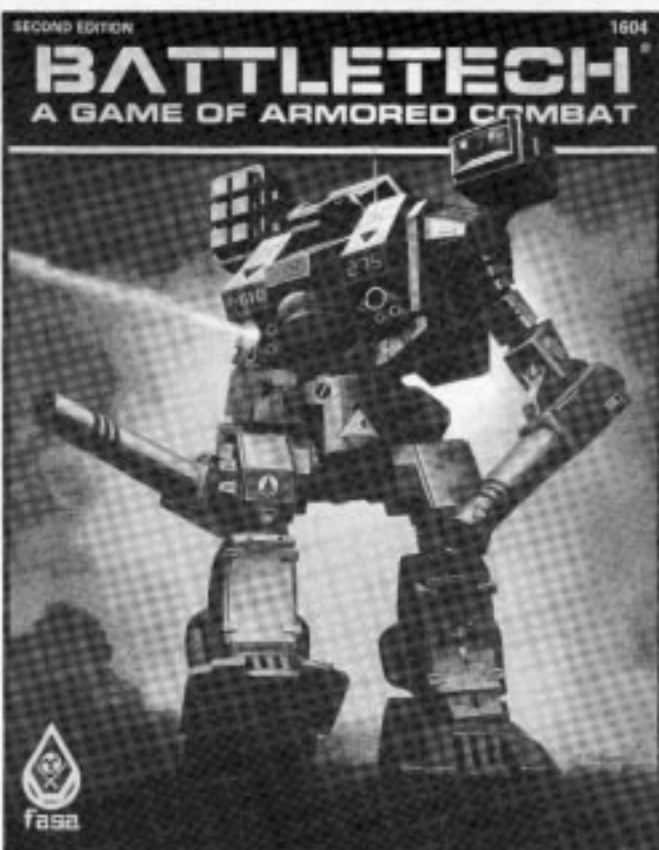
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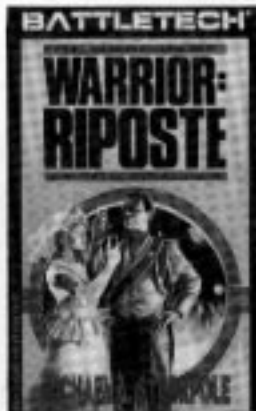
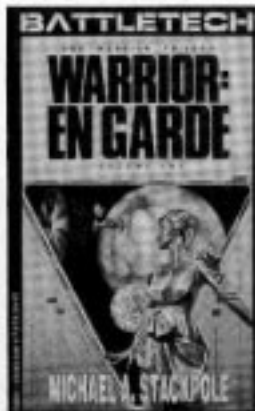
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FORUM

Continued from page 10

I ran the introductory AD&D game at a local con a couple of weeks ago and wrote up the players' character sheets a little differently. I was reading the statistics for a 15 strength to the players, and as I was about to give the additional gold-piece weight encumbrance, I realized what a useless statistic it was. It is an addition or subtraction made to the formula used to calculate the maximum weight a character could carry if his strength is abnormally high or low. The problems are that: 1) the formula gives the weight in pounds, while the adjustment is in gold-piece weights (the old saw about apples and oranges pops to mind); and, 2) what is needed on the character sheet is not the adjustment to the maximum weight a character can carry, but the *maximum weight* the character can carry.

What I did for those players (and for the characters I roll up for myself) is to calculate that [maximum weight] figure. It's a lot easier to do this if the information I need is in a chart. I worked out the figures for myself.

I did find a nice little goof. Your 3-strength magic-user has a base carrying capacity of 35 lbs. [*Players Handbook*, page 101] but has a penalty of 350 gp [page 9], which comes out to - 35 pounds. Point a wand at someone? Carry spell components? [It is difficult to do] with a net 0 lbs. carrying capacity.

On a related note, keeping track of encumbrance is difficult when many relatively heavy items listed in the provisions tables have no weights listed. A monk, thief, druid, magic-user, or illusionist is not going to have much in the way of weapons or armor but may well stock up on other necessary items, and only arms and armor have weight listings (arms in gold pieces, armor in pounds). If the amount of treasure a character carries back from an adventure determines whether or not he is able to pay for the training needed to go up a level before the next adventure, the character and the player need to know precisely how much his equipment weighs. Frankly, the game has failed to provide this vital information since the original D&D game came out.

Strength Chart

Strength	Unencumbered wt. limit (lbs.)
3	0
4-5	10
6-7	20
8-11	35
12-13	45
14-15	55
16	70
17	85
18	110
18/01-50	135
18/51-75	160
18/76-90	185
18/90-99	235
18/00	335
19	485
20	535
21	635
22	785
23	935
24	1235
25	1535

S. D. Anderson
Whittier CA

Ω

Continued from page 37

Scroll the Ancient Yule-Tide Carol (Falalalala Lalalala)

Wall of Missiles (Perforation)

Level: 5 Components: V,S
Range: 1"/lvl. CT: 3 segments
Duration: Special ST: None
AE: Special

Explanation/Description: When this spell is cast, a solid wall of speeding missiles, similar to heavy crossbow quarrels, is created. The wall covers a 1' square per level of the spell-caster; each 1' square contains 64 missiles, which hit for 2-7 hp damage apiece. This spell would have been Nimrod's greatest (in fact, only) triumph, if he had included some way to point the missiles away from the spell-caster, or to make the spell function when there is something between the missiles and the spell-caster.

Minor Globe of Iron (Conglobation - it's a word; look it up)

Level: 1 Components: V,M
Range: 0 CT: 1 segment
Duration: Perm. ST: None
AE: One globe

Explanation/Description: This spell creates a sphere of solid iron exactly 0.175 inches in diameter that is perfectly round and smooth. The material component for this spell is a gem of at least 500 gp value. The verbal component is the second letter of the alphabet, repeated twice.

Monster Invulnerability (Exacerbation)

Level: 6 Components: V
Range: 3"/lvl. CT: 6 segments
Duration: 5 rnds./lvl. ST: Special
AE: 1 monster/lvl.

Explanation/Description: This spell causes affected monsters to be immune to all forms of magical and nonmagical attacks. Monsters gain a saving throw (whether they want it or not) equal to their adjusted reaction roll, which is rolled on 1d100. To save the reader a lengthy perusal of the Encounter Reaction table (*Dungeon Masters Guide*, page 63), it should be noted that this spell affects only actively hostile monsters and those that cannot save vs. spells on a roll of 26 or higher.

Fools Summoning III (Consternation/Exasperation)

Level: 5 Components: V,S
Range: 5" CT: 5 rounds
Duration: Variable ST: None
AE: Special

Explanation/Description: This spell summons three fools (i.e., NPCs with combined intelligence, wisdom, and charisma scores of less than three - among them). They tag along, asking stupid question,

telling knock-knock jokes, and otherwise making themselves obstructive and objectionable. They are immune to all forms of attack and will not go away until they are good and ready. The quickest way to get rid of these fools may be to teach them to cast some of Nimrod's other spells.

Protection From Normal Gold

(Ruination)
Level: 2 Components: V
Range: 0 CT: 2 segments
Duration: Perm. ST: None
AE: Personal

Explanation/Description: When this spell is cast, it sets up a field of negative energy that repels all nonmagical gold away from the spell-caster's body to a distance of 2" per level of the spell-caster (the distance increases, therefore, as the caster advances in levels). This affects coins, jewelry, and all other nonmagical items containing gold (including electrum, which is part gold). It does not affect gold dragons, gold bugs, or any kind of gold which might be capable of harming the spell-caster, as that, obviously, would not be normal gold.

Ω

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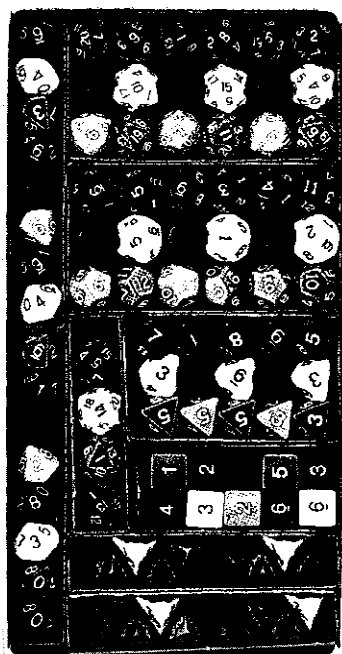
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In DRAGON® issue #105 ("The Big Guns"), some basic rules were outlined for the use of heavy military equipment in the MARVEL SUPER HEROES® game. The MARVEL SUPER HEROES Advanced Set includes detailed rules for tanks, planes and such, but the descriptions of the different vehicles remain very vague. When playing against a submarine or helicopter, it helps to have a clear picture or exactly what the vehicle can and cannot do.

In a world-spanning campaign, your characters are likely to run into Soviet as well as American weapons. The Soviets are noted for their production of simple but

dependable equipment, and weapons manufacturing is one of their few profitable industries. Having licensed the production of their older weapon systems to

other countries, the Soviets now have instructors and advisors stationed all over the world. The vehicles mentioned in this article can be found in many places. For example, the Hind helicopter can be found in Afghanistan and Nicaragua, and Whiskey-class submarines are used to spy on Western countries.

Each description has a few uncertainties, as the Soviets do not publish details on their military vehicles if they can avoid it. Statistics agreed upon by most sources were used, as were the most common NATO designations. When ammunition or missile supplies for a weapon are not given, make up a reasonable result (up to 10 missiles and 1,000 rounds of ammunition).

The Russians constantly upgrade their equipment. Reports have reached the Western press that the newest Soviet tanks have armor that is highly effective against antitank weapons. The Soviets are also designing shells which they hope will crack America's new ceramic tank armor. In view of this, just about any of the superscientific weapons described in the MARVEL SUPER HEROES game may be placed on Soviet vehicles. You can bet the Soviets of the Marvel Universe® create weapons to deal with Western heroes as well as with super villains.

The following terms are used in the vehicle descriptions in this article:

Body: Body is the amount of damage a vehicle can take before it stops operating.

Different Body ratings are given against conventional, electric, and magnetic attacks.

Bulls-eye targets: These are the least-armored parts of a vehicle which a precision weapon may be able to hit. For example, an archer may not be able to damage the hull of a tank, but he could break the tank's infrared spotlight.

Control: This is how well a vehicle can execute changes in direction and speed.

Crew: This is the number of people a vehicle requires in order to operate. A crew member may carry almost any kind of hand weapon the referee chooses.

Kill results: If an attacker scores a Kill result on a vehicle, the hit should cause serious damage to the craft. For example, a Kill result against a ship might (at the Judge's option) stop the engine or jam one of the propellers.

Protection: This is the amount of armor a vehicle provides for passengers inside it. Different protection ranks are given against conventional attacks and both chemical and biological weapons. Soviet crew members may be individually protected by special suits which give Excellent Protection against chemical and biological weapons. Such a suit cuts Agility and Fighting abilities by two ranks and offers no protection against blows or gunfire.

Speed: This is the rank representing the maximum safe speed of a vehicle. One knot (used in seagoing-vessel descriptions) is about 1.15 MPH.

Armament descriptions have been kept as simple as possible so that each cannon, machine gun, or other projectile weapon will have a simple classification. This allows readers to use the game characteristics of the weapons, bombs, and missiles in the Advanced Set Players' Book on pages 41-46.

Whiskey V class submarine

The Whiskey-class submarine was designed in the early 1950s and is a small vessel that forms a compromise between having a long cruising range and having the ability to maneuver close to a coastline. Approximately 260 of these subs were built, and they have been sold to Poland, North Korea, Cuba, Egypt, and Indonesia, among other places. The People's Republic of China has produced its own version of this model. A Whiskey-class submarine ran aground near a major Swedish naval base in 1981. Others have been detected in the same area since then, suggesting this submarine is being used for coastal reconnaissance.

The Whiskey-class submarine has Excellent Control, Poor Speed, and a Remarkable Body, with Excellent Protection for its crew of 54. Though small, this submarine has a heavy, pressure-resistant, compartmentalized hull; if one chamber is breached, it can be sealed to protect others from flooding. Each separate hull breach reduces the sub's Control and Body by one rank; if either ability reaches Fee-

ble, the helpless sub sinks. The electrical systems essential to both control and the life-support systems have Good Protection from electrical or magnetic attacks.

Bull's eyes may be scored against the periscope and radar disc. Damaging the disc (Good Material Strength) destroys the ship's radar system, making it possible for planes and ships to approach undetected. Damaging the periscope (Typical Material Strength) renders the ship blind while it is submerged.

A Kill result can damage one of the submarine's two propellers, cutting Speed and Control in half. If both shafts are damaged, the ship has no means of propulsion and sits dead in the water (though if submerged, it can surface by blowing its ballast tanks). A Kill result with enough power to penetrate the hull is able to damage one of the submarine's four engines. Two diesel engines are used when surfaced, and two electric engines are used when submerged (diesel engines require a great deal of air in order to work).

This submarine's top speed is 18 knots on the surface and 14 knots submerged. Its best depth is a secret but is assumed to be less than 500'. To go below this level requires a FEAT roll against the hull's strength. A White or Green result means the sub survives; a Yellow roll means the sub drops a rank in every class; and on a Red roll, the submarine is crushed and destroyed.

This submarine requires 25' of water to maneuver on the surface. In shallow water, the sub will run aground. Escape then requires a Green FEAT roll on the Typical column, but may be tried only once every 10 turns.

The primary weapons carried on this submarine are four bow torpedo tubes, each able to fire 21"-diameter torpedoes. This sub also has two stern tubes able to fire 16"-diameter torpedoes. The torpedoes can be treated as missiles (Excellent Body, Remarkable Control, Excellent Speed, 25-area Range), but they can only be fired at objects in the water. These torpedoes usually carry concentrated-explosive warheads (Remarkable damage), but NATO believes they can carry nuclear bombs of unknown size (Unearthly to Class 1000 damage).

Whiskey-class submarines have been observed with several types of deck guns, so the Judge may put almost any size machine gun or artillery piece there. Crewmen may be equipped with almost any type of hand weapon listed in the Player's Book.

Nanuchka class III missile corvette

The Nanuchka-class corvette is produced by the Russians for their own navy, but these ships have also been sold to several countries in the Middle East and to India. Each corvette has Typical Control, Remarkable Speed, and a Remarkable Body providing Excellent Protection for a

crew of 100-120.

These missile corvettes were designed for firing antiship missiles. Each corvette has a wide hull which makes it a steady missile-firing platform in rough seas. They operate both as fleet escort vessels and as shore patrol boats. Though lightly armored, these ships have advanced electronic countermeasures of Remarkable efficiency to prevent them from being seen on radar.

These corvettes are compartmentalized to protect them from flooding. When the outer hull is breached, only one chamber will flood before that chamber is sealed off. Each breach of the hull causes the ship to lose one rank in both Body and Control. Whenever the ship reaches Feeble in either of these ranks, it sinks.

Possible Bull's-eye targets are the radar disc, radio antenna, and any crew members operating on the deck. The disc and antenna each have Good Material Strength. Damaging the radar disc kills the early-warning system, while breaking a corvette's antenna prevents the ship from communicating by radio and cuts off its electronic countermeasures.

A Kill result means one of the three propellers (Excellent Material Strength) has been damaged or fouled. This reduces the ship's control and speed by one-third. The Nanuchka-class corvette has six diesel engines and normally travels at 32 knots.

This corvette cannot move into water less than 40' deep or it will run aground. Escape then requires a Green FEAT roll on the Typical column; escape attempts may only be made once every 10 turns.

The Nanuchka-class corvette carries two close-range weapons systems: a 76-mm gun (treated as light artillery in the game rules) and a Gatling turret (treated as a military machine gun). Its principle long-range antiaircraft defense is a twin SA-N-4 surface-to-air missile launcher. The launcher is housed in the deck and requires about five minutes or 50 combat turns to pop up when needed. An SA-N-4 missile is fired vertically, then guided by radar (Good Body, Incredible Control, Excellent Speed, 60-area Range, concentrated-explosive warhead). The ship's main weapon is a set of two triple SS-N-9 surface-to-surface missile launchers. The SS-N-9 missile is a radio-linked missile, so its course can be corrected if fired at a target over the horizon (Excellent Body, Incredible Control, Excellent Speed, 68-mile Range, high-explosive warhead).

Mi-24 Hind helicopter

The Hind is a multipurpose attack antiarmor helicopter. It is in service all over the Soviet Union and has been used extensively in Afghanistan, where it has become known as a symbol of Soviet brutality against a poorly armed enemy.

This helicopter has Excellent Control, Remarkable Speed, a Typical Body, and provides Good Protection. The Mi-24 has a crew of two, a pilot and co-pilot, and can carry eight passengers. The helicopter normally offers Typical Protection, with Poor Protection from magnetic and electrical attacks. The crew and passengers receive no protection from the helicopter from chemical or biological weapons.

A Bulls-eye result against the Hind may damage the tail rotor, requiring the craft to land immediately. A Kill result destroys the motor or main rotor, causing the helicopter to crash immediately.

The Hind gunship has a cruising speed of 140 MPH and a 300-mile Range. It can land and take off in a single area and hover in one place until it runs out of fuel. While hovering, it can turn to face any horizontal direction.

The Hind comes in several versions, each with different types of armament. All versions can carry four missiles each. The Hind A has a heavy machine gun (treat as a military machine gun) mounted in its nose. The Hind C has no nose gun, while the Hind D and E each carry a four-barrel machine gun (treat as four military machine guns). The Hind A, C, and D carry either the AT-2 Swatter or AT-3 Sagger antitank missiles. The AT-2 Swatter is a heat-seeking missile with a concentrated-explosive warhead (Excellent Body, Remarkable Control, Excellent Speed, 7,000' Range). Its guidance system is designed to find hot tank engines. The AT

3 Sagger is a wire-guided missile with a concentrated-explosive warhead (Excellent Body, Excellent Speed, 840' Range). The Sagger's Control is equal to the operator's Agility since he guides the missile by sight. The Sagger, also known as the Milutka, can be fired by two-man teams on the ground. The Hind E carries four AT-6 Spiral missiles, which are guided by a laser beam focused on the target; the laser can be operated by the helicopter or by men on the ground. The Spirals concentrated-explosive warhead is designed to penetrate armor, while its Control rank is equal to the operators Agility (Excellent Body, Amazing Speed, 16,500' Range).

Sukhoi Sui-17 Fitter-C

The Sui-17 is a tactical ground-support jet fighter. The Fitter-C model was built in part for export and is used not only by Russia but by Peru, Egypt, and several Warsaw Pact countries. Sui-17s saw combat in both sides of the recent Libyan-Egyptian conflict.

This aircraft has Excellent Control, Shift X Speed, and a Typical Body providing Typical Protection. It is a single-seat aircraft with a crew of one (the pilot). The fuselage has Typical Protection, but the electronics system has only Poor Protection from electronic and magnetic attack. The plane has electronic countermeasures which provide Good Protection against radar detection. The pressurized cockpit gives Unearthly Protection to the pilot from all chemical and biological weapons as long as it remains sealed.

A Bulls-eye result may damage the plane's controls, requiring it to land immediately. A Kill result means the engine is knocked out and the plane will crash.

The Fitter-C has a single turbojet engine. At sea level its maximum speed is 798 MPH, while it can go 1,432 MPH at its standard altitude of 59,050'. It can climb 45,275' per minute. However, the Sui-17 is designed for close support of ground troops and often operates well at near-ground level. This fighter requires 25 areas of smooth, hard surface in a straight line in order to take off or land.

The Fitter-C carries two 30mm NR-30 cannons (treat as light artillery). One cannon is mounted on each wing with 70 rounds of ammo. The jet also carries drop tanks and has six wing pylons able to carry up to 11,023 lbs. of bombs, napalm, and missiles. This jet normally carries AS-7 Kerry air-to-surface missiles (Excellent Body, Remarkable Control, Excellent Speed, 6.8-mile Range, high-explosive warhead). The AS-7 is believed by Western sources to follow a beam sent by the aircraft to its target. It is not known if the beam is a laser or radar beam.

The Su-17 is equipped with radar and two separate radios - one for contacting its base and other aircraft, and one for talking to ground troops.

The Su-17 can ram for Remarkable damage to itself and its target if in flight.



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However, if either its Body or Control rank falls to Feeble, it blows up. It must make an immediate Control check (Yellow FEAT) in order to avoid going out of control when it strikes anything or is struck itself. If the plane is damaged, the pilot may eject if he makes a FEAT roll against his, Agility.

T-62 main battle tank

This vehicle is manufactured by the Soviet Union and is used by its own army, as well as by Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Egypt, Hungary, Iraq, Israel, Libya, Poland, Romania, and Syria. It has an Incredible Body, Poor Speed, Excellent Control, and Remarkable Protection. The tank has a crew of four (commander, gunner, loader, and driver).

The T-62 has up to 3" of welded armor and weighs 16,600 lbs. The crew receives Excellent Protection not only from chemical and biological weapons but from radiation when the tank is sealed. Its electrical systems, including the ignition and radio, have Excellent Protection from energy attacks.

On the T-62 series, Bull's-eye targets include the radio antenna, headlights, and infrared spotlight. The tank also has two periscopes used by the commander when the hatches are shut. All these items have Typical Material Strength. On a Kill result, the Judge may decide to jam one of the treads or damage the engine, stopping the tank in place until it is repaired.

The T-62 has a water-cooled diesel engine and is capable of moving about 30 MPH on flat terrain. The tank can climb a slope of 60°, roll over a vertical obstacle 30" high, and ford water up to 4½' deep without modifications. Enough fuel is carried for traveling 310 miles, but extra gas tanks can be carried on the tanks rear. The infrared spotlight removes any Control loss during night travel.

The T-62 has a forward-mounted 115mm cannon (treat as heavy artillery) which uses shells with rear fins to stabilize them in flight. The cannon can only fire in the direction the turret is facing, but the turret can turn 360°. Also mounted on the turret is a 7.62mm machine gun (treat as a military machine gun). The infrared spotlight is mounted next to the guns and removes any loss of accuracy at night.

Like most Soviet tanks, the T-62 can produce a smoke screen of Excellent density. This screen is produced by pumping diesel fuel into the exhaust system, and it spreads over 1 area every 2 turns behind the tank.

The T-62 can ram for Remarkable damage. If it rams and rolls a Red result on the Remarkable column, it will run over the target (if the target is not too large) and do Incredible damage.

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MT1, All This and World War II by Ray Winninger

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CONVENTION CALENDAR

Convention Calendar Policies

This column is a service to our readers worldwide. Anyone may place a free listing for a game convention here, but the following guidelines **must** be observed.

In order to ensure that all convention listings contain accurate and timely information, all material should be either typed double-spaced or printed legibly on standard manuscript paper. The contents of each listing must be short, succinct, and under 150 words long.

The information given in the listing **must** include the following, in this order:

1. Convention title and dates held;
2. Site and location;
3. Guests of honor (if applicable);
4. Special events offered;
5. Registration fees or attendance requirements; and,
6. Address(es) and telephone number(s) where additional information and confirmation can be obtained.

Convention flyers, newsletters, and other mass-mailed announcements will not be considered for use in this column; we prefer to see a cover letter with the announcement as well. **No** call-in listings are accepted. Unless stated otherwise, all dollar values given for U.S. and Canadian conventions are in U.S. currency.

WARNING: We are not responsible for incorrect information sent to us by convention staff members. Please check your convention listing carefully! Our wide circulation ensures that over a quarter of a million readers worldwide see each issue. Accurate information is your responsibility.

Copy deadlines are the last Monday of each month, two months prior to the on-sale date of an issue. Thus, the copy deadline for the August issue is the last Monday of June. Announcements for North American and Pacific conventions must be mailed to: Convention Calendar, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 111, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. Announcements for Europe must be posted an additional month before the deadline to: Convention Calendar, DRAGON® Magazine, TSR Limited, 120 Church End, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge CB1 3LB, United Kingdom.

If a convention listing must be changed because the convention has been cancelled, the dates have changed, or incorrect information has been printed, please contact us immediately. Most questions or changes should be directed to either Robin Jenkins or Roger E. Moore at TSR, Inc., (414) 248-3625 (U.S.A.). Questions or changes concerning European conventions should be directed to TSR Limited, (0223) 212517 (U.K.).

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DALLAS FANTASY FAIR, April 7-9

Held at the Marriott Park Central, 7750 I-635 at Coit Road in Dallas, Texas, this gaming convention will feature 140 dealers tables, more than 60 guests, two 24-hour video rooms, Japanimation, 24-hour gaming, four-track programming, a masquerade, an open con suite, an art show and auction, a charity auction, artists' and writers' workshops, autograph sessions, filksinging, dancing, an amateur-film festival, a talent show, and more. Approximately 2,200 people are expected for this event. Admission is \$15 for three days, if paid in advance, or \$20 at the door. One-day memberships will be available at the door; prices are \$8 for Friday, \$10 for Saturday, and \$8 for Sunday. Write to: Bulldog Productions, P.O. Box 820488, Dallas TX 75382; or call: (214) 349-3367.

GAME FAIRE '89, April 7-9

The 10th-annual GAME FAIRE convention will be held at the Spokane Falls Community College in Spokane, Wash. Events will run from Friday night through Sunday afternoon, and include game tournaments, microarmor and historical miniatures, a video room, dealers' tables, role-playing games, board games, family games, a games auction, and a demonstration by the local SCA. Registration for GAME FAIRE '89 is \$10 prepaid or \$12 at the door. One-day memberships are available at \$5 for Friday or Sunday, or \$6 for Saturday. All profits go to the Wishing Star Foundation, a charity dedicated to helping children. Write to: Merlyn's, W 201 Riverside, Spokane WA 99201; or call: (509) 624-0957.

ROUNDCON IV, April 7-9

The Round Table Gaming Society will hold this gaming convention at the Russell House Student Union on the University of South Carolina campus. Events will include multiple-round AD&D® and CHAMPIONS* tournaments, single-event role-playing games of all types, miniatures events, a video room, a miniatures-painting contest, board games, and rooms for open gaming, with awards and door prizes. Preregistration is \$3 if postmarked before March 15; for confirmation of preregistration, please send an SASE. Write to: ROUNDCON IV, USC Box 80018, Columbia SC 29225; or call: (803) 254-2601 or (803) 772-4784.

GAME CON, April 8

Game Master, Ltd. presents its first gaming convention in the Bergen Mall Auditorium, Route 4 East, Paramus, NJ. (only six miles from the George Washington Bridge). Featured events will include board-game tournaments, AD&D® tournaments, a miniatures-painting contest, and an open-gaming area. Preregistration is \$2; otherwise, admission is \$3 at the door. This convention will open at 10 A.M. and run until

8 P.M. on Saturday. GAME CON is still looking for players and game masters. Gamers may receive more information by writing to: GAME CON, c/o Game Master, Ltd., Village Mall - Lower Promenade, Bergen Mall Shopping Center, Paramus NJ 07652; or call: (201) 843-3308.

MOUNTAINTOP '89, April 8-9

This gaming convention will be held at Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pa. Events include an AD&D® tournament, a games auction, and a swap meet. Board, role-playing, and computer games will also be played. Preregistration is \$8 before March 15; thereafter, registration is \$10. Send an SASE to: Earl Kinsley, U.C. Box 276, Lehigh University, Bethlehem PA 18015.

SCRYCON '89, April 8

Able adventurers are needed to regain lost shards of the Famous Crystal Monolith at SCRYCON '89, the seventh-annual one-day tournament sponsored by the seekers of the Crystal Monolith Gaming Club. This year's convention will be held at the Red Hook Methodist Church in Red Hook, N.Y. (approximately 60 miles south of Albany on Route 9). The tournament will consist of AD&D® tournaments, alternate games, miniatures-painting contests, and our popular used-game flea market. Admission is \$5 for the whole day. Send an SASE to: SCYRON '89, PO. Box 896, Pleasant Valley NY 12569.

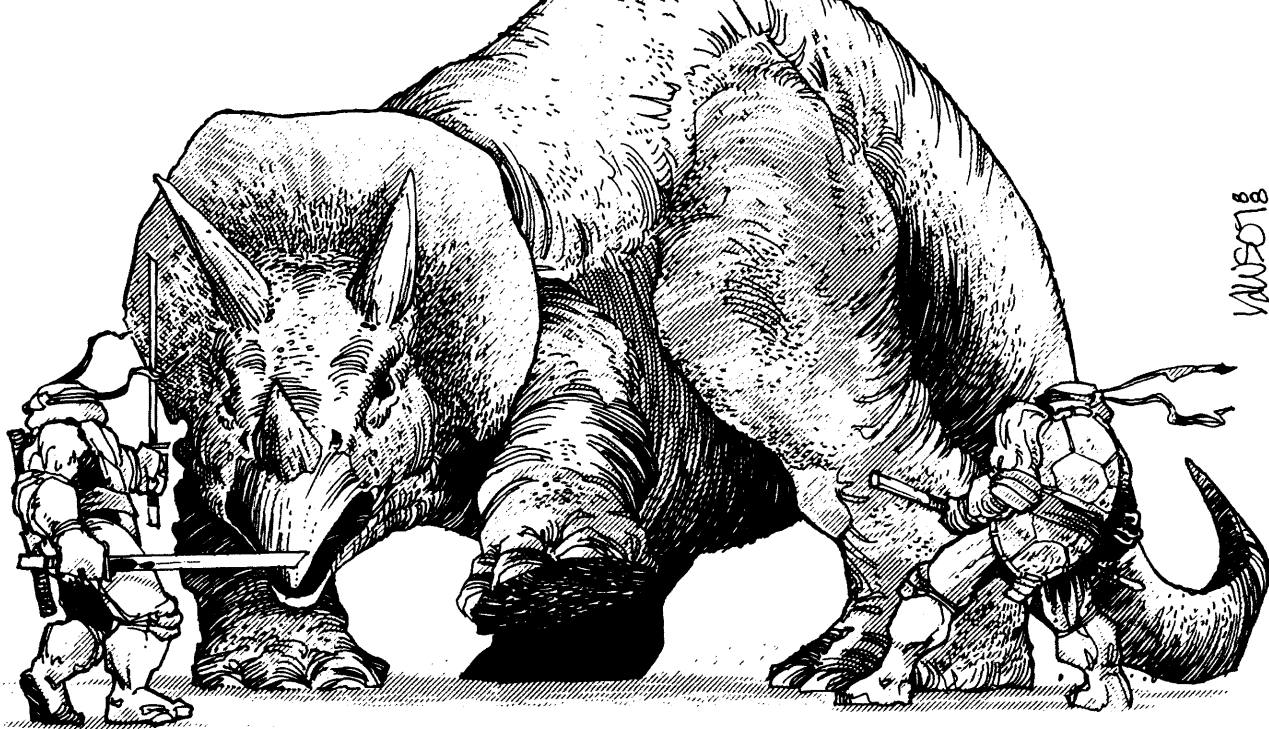
VALLEYCON II, April 8-9

Sponsored by the Northeast Wisconsin Game Players Association (GPA), this gaming convention will be held at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay. All forms of gaming will be presented, including a 40' X 39' miniatures battle of the Assault on Hoth, strategic miniatures and board-game battles, and role-playing events ranging from the D&D® and AD&D® games to science-fiction games. Other events include a miniatures-painting contest, door prizes, and more. Ticket prices for game masters are \$3 plus \$2 per event entered in the convention for one day, or \$4.50 plus \$2 per event entered in the convention for two days. To preregister, send your name, address, telephone number, game system you wish to run, and the admission and entry fee (check or money order only) to: VALLEYCON Headquarters, 1211 Morris Avenue, Green Bay WI 54304. Game-master packets and schedules are at the convention. Send an SASE to the address above, or call: Brian Severa at (414) 494-7313.

BAMACON III, April 14-16

This science-fiction, fantasy, and gaming convention will be held at the Econo-Lodge (formerly the Stagecoach Inn), located at 4810 Skyland Boulevard East in Tuscaloosa, Ala. Special guests include Hal Clement, Nancy Springer, Brad Strickland, Phil Foglio, Mary Hanson-Roberts, Allen Hammack, Dr. Maureen Kendrick, and many others. Featured events include author and artist panels, movies (Wiz-

* indicates a Canadian convention.



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ards, Highlander, Heavy Metal, Star Trek, The Princess Bride, and more), an art show and auction, a Friday night ice cream reception, an AD&D® team tournament with \$210 in cash prizes, many other tournaments with prizes, filksinging, author readings, a Saturday night costume contest (with cash prizes), a masquerade ball (right after the contest), exhibitions, parties, a fantastic dealers' bazaar, and an all-you-can-eat banquet (\$6, scheduled for Sunday at 10 A.M.). Preregistration is \$20, or \$25 at the door. Dealers' tables are \$40 (includes one free membership). T-shirts are \$7 with preregistration, or \$10 at the convention. Hotel rates are \$29.38 for one to four people (mention BAMA-CON III). Write to: BAMA-CON III, University of Alabama, PO. Box 6542, Tuscaloosa AL 35486; or call Dave at: (205) 758-4577; or Steven at: (205) 758-2186.

LEPRECON 15, April 14-16

LEPRECON is an art-oriented science-fiction and fantasy convention with a strong gaming focus. Events will be held at the Phoenix Hyatt Regency in sunny, downtown Phoenix, Ariz. Guests of honor are author Chelsea Quinn Yarbro and artist Richard Hescox. Gaming events include AD&D® (Monster Mash and more), BATTLETECH®, microarmor, WARHAMMER® FANTASY BATTLE, GURPS®, STAR WARS®, and EMPIRE BUILDER® games. Other events include special workshops and panels, a miniatures-painting contest, a used-games auction, open gaming, check-out games, and more. Regular activities include an art show, a dealers' room, movies, Japanimation, computers, panels, parties, and other great stuff. Registration is \$25. Write to: LEPRECON, PO. Box 26665, Tempe AZ 85282; for gaming information, write to: Don Harrington, 3505 East Campbell #14, Phoenix AZ 85018; or call: (602) 956-1344 (before 10 P.M. MST).

DEF-CON I, April 15-16

Sponsored by THE CLUB, this gaming convention will be held at the Howard Johnson's in Portage, Ind. (intersection of Route 20 and U.S. 249). Special events include group vs. group role-playing, and RPGA™ Network and computer tournaments. Other events include AD&D®, MARVEL SUPER HEROES®, CHILL®, TWILIGHT: 2000®, and BOOT HILL® games. Fees are \$3 preregistered, or \$5 at the door. Prices are from free to \$3 per game. Write to: David Machin, 719 Juniper Road, Valparaiso IN 46383; or call: (219) 759-2530.

GAMEMASTER '89, April 15

Boise, Idaho's favorite gaming convention will again be held in the Student Union Building of Boise State University. Featured games will include AD&D®, MEGATRAVELLER®, CAR WARS®, WARHAMMER®, BATTLETECH®, GURPS®, STAR TREK®, STAR FLEET BATTLES®, MARVEL SUPER HEROES®, and ZOMAX® games, with open gaming, miniatures contests, and an auction. Our guest of honor, Gary Thomas, will explain how to get your role-playing modules published. We will also have a *Star Trek* trivia competition. Registration will be \$5 at the door or \$4 if your preregistration is received before April 8. To preregister, write to: The Gamemaster's Guild, 4948 Kootenai, Suite 204, Boise ID 83705; or call the Gamemaster's Guild at: (208) 338-1410.

PLATTECON BETA, April 15-16

Sponsored by the Platteville Gaming Association, this two-day convention will be held at the Student Center of the University of Wisconsin-

Platteville. Gaming events will begin at 9 A.M. and run until 9 P.M. on Saturday and will begin at 9 A.M. and run until 5 P.M. on Sunday. Our featured guest will be E. Gary Gyax. Special events include a LASER TAG* competition, a miniatures contest, and an RPGA™ Network AD&D® tournament. Other game events will be announced at the door. Admission for both days is \$7 at the door, or \$5 if paid in advance. Send an SASE to: Platteville Gaming Association, PO. Box 109, Platteville WI 53818.

AMIGOCON 4, April 21-23

This science-fiction, fantasy, and gaming convention will be held at the Holiday Inn Sunland Park in El Paso, Tex. Melinda Snodgrass is author guest of honor, and Frank Kelly Freas is artist guest of honor. Other guests include Walter Jon Williams, Rick and Pati Cook, Jennifer Robertson, Mel White, and George Alec Effinger. Advance membership fees are \$12. Registrations purchased at the door are \$15 for all three days, or \$7.50 for one day. Write to: AMIGOCON 4, PO. Box 3177, El Paso TX 79923.

CHATTANOOGA COMICS, CARDS, & COLLECTIBLES SHOW, April 21-23

This semiannual collectors' show will be held at the Eastgate Mall on Brainerd Road, just off I-75, in Chattanooga, Tenn. Show hours are 9 A.M. to 9 P.M. Friday and Saturday, and 11 A.M. to 6 P.M. Sunday. Guests will include representatives from Marvel Comics. Events will include: an AD&D® tournament (which begins Friday, with winners announced Sunday); an ongoing DRAGONLANCE® board game; video showings of *Star Trek Bloopers*, *The X-Men*, and more; an auction hosted by our own Freddy Krueger; and a costume contest Saturday night. Admission is free! The entire mall is the showroom area; it will include comic books, baseball cards, *Star Trek* and Dr. Who memorabilia, Japanimation, gaming, and more. Dealer tables are \$100 each, or \$150 for two. Tables are 8' long. Write to: Amazing World of Fantasy, 2518-C Shorter Avenue, Rome GA 30161; or call: Dana Pinkard (show chairperson) at (404) 235-2179, or Patrick Swinford at (404) 234-5309.

GALACTIC TREKFEST, April 21-23

This science-fiction and gaming convention will be held at the Henry VIII Hotel in St. Louis, Mo. Guests of honor include Richard Hatch, Merritt Butrick, Bill Mumy, and others. Special events include a banquet, open gaming, contests, costing, regional science-fiction meetings, convention rooms, and dealers' tables. Weekend passes by preregistration are \$20; other passes are available by inquiry or may be purchased at the door. Over 33 events in all will be sponsored at this convention, including an acting class by Richard Hatch, all-night videos and gaming, and more. Write to: GALACTIC TREKFEST, 640 White Street, Belleville IL 62221; or call: (618) 233-2404.

SALUTE '89, April 21-23

This gaming convention will be held at the Best Western King's Inn, 5411 Kingsway, Burnaby, B.C., Canada. Featured events will include table-top miniatures, board gaming, and fantasy role-playing. In addition, 7th-edition 15mm Ancients, SQUAD LEADER®, and D&D® tournaments and a miniatures-painting contest will be held, along with trade stands and a swap meet. Write to: Barry Kemp, Convention Director, SALUTE '89, 5850 Rumble Street, Burnaby, B.C., CANADA V5J 2C4; or call: (604) 526-4463 or (604) 437-3038.

AGOG: A GATHERING OF GAMERS, April 22-23

The University of Arizona Historical Games Society invites one and all to their second-annual gathering of gamers, to be held in the main ballroom of the University of Arizona Student Union. Tournaments are offered for TRAVELLER®, MUSTANGS AND MESSER-SCHMIDTS®, JOHNNY REB®, BATTLETECH®, CIRCUS IMPERIUM®, WARHAMMER 40,000®, and AD&D® games. Open gaming will be offered. Role-playing, board, and miniatures gamers are encouraged to attend this event. A game auction will also be held; all attendees are invited to participate (bring your old games). Registration for this convention is \$3 for each day, or \$5 for the weekend. Write to: Melissa Kay Giffords, 2859 North Soldiers Trail, Tucson AZ 85749; or call her at: (602) 749-4070. You may also call Robert Orman at: (602) 299-1315.

COSCON 89, April 22

Sponsored again this year by the Circle of Swords, this one-day gaming convention will be held at the Butler County Community College in Butler, Pa. Scheduled events will include RPGA™ Network tournaments, board games, miniatures events, and other role-playing games. Also included is a dealers' room and a miniatures-painting contest. Registration is \$6 until March 31, and \$8 thereafter. Send an SASE to: COSCON, c/o Dave Schnur, 127 Crosslands Road, Butler PA 16001; or call: (412) 287-6797 or (412) 283-1159.

ONCE UPON A CON, April 28-30

The International Fantasy Gaming Society will sponsor its first-ever gaming convention in Denver, Colo. Guests of honor will include Larry Niven and David L. Arneson. Events will include IFGS live gaming, seminars, a live tournament maze, board and role-playing games, an art show and auction, a costume contest and ball, and a variety of science-fiction and fantasy programs. The convention will be held at the Holiday Inn, I-25 at 120th Avenue in Denver, Colo. Special room rates are available. Write to: ONCE UPON A CON, PO. Box 16436, Colorado Springs CO 80935; or call Mark Matthews-Simmons at: (303) 499-2812.

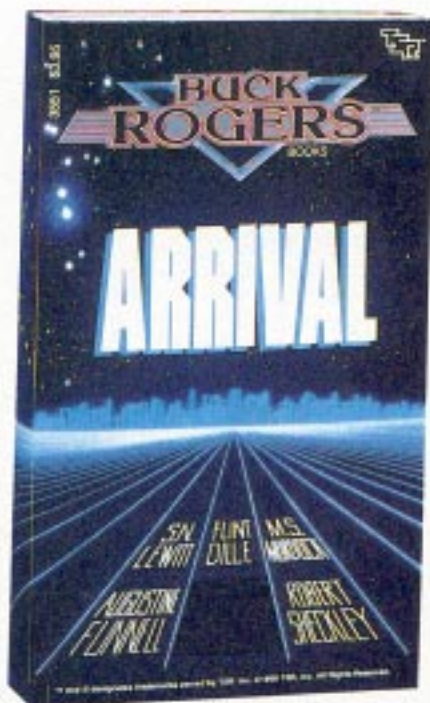
WERECON X, April 28-30

This year's WERECON role-playing game convention will be sponsored by the Detroit Gaming Center and the City of Detroit Recreation Department, and will be held at the Light-house Center on Riverside Drive in Detroit, Mich. Guests will include Erick Wujcik (designer of the TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES®, REVISED RECON®, and NINJAS AND SUPER-SPIES® games) and a stellar cast of Detroit's finest game masters. A complete schedule of role-playing games and tournaments will be featured. There will be no dealers room at this convention. Registration for WERECON X is free. Game fees per event range from \$1 to \$4. Write to: Erick Wujcik, PO. Box 1623, Detroit MI 48231; or call: (313) 833-3016.

THE WIZARD'S CHALLENGE, April 28-30

This seventh-annual convention will be held at the Victoria Inn in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada. Tournaments will include an AD&D® team tournament, and BATTLETECH®, STAR FLEET BATTLES®, CAR WARS®, and ADVANCED SQUAD LEADERS® events. Other features will include board and role-playing games, miniatures events, demonstrations of games, movies, a games auction, and a closing-night Medieval

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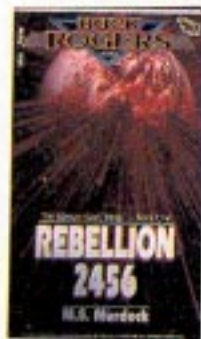
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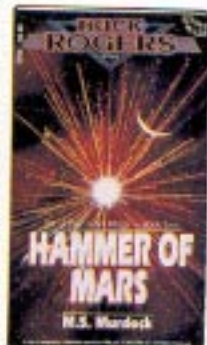
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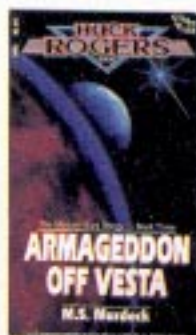
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JUNE 1989



SEPTEMBER 1989



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Feast. Admission is \$5 for the entire weekend. The AD&D® tournament fee is \$20; other game fees may vary. Write to: Ken McGovern, c/o The Wizards Corner II, 2124B Broad Street, Regina, Saskatchewan, CANADA, S4P 1Y5; or call: (306) 757-8544.

UMF-CON, April 29-30

This convention will be held at the Student Center at the University of Maine at Farmington, in Farmington, Maine. CHAMPIONS*, World War II miniatures, TOP SECRET/S.I.™, BATTLE-SYSTEM™, AD&D®, and DIPLOMACY* games will be featured, with live mysteries, board games, and contests for miniatures painting and art. Admission is \$5, with a \$2 charge per game. Send an SASE to: Table Gaming Club, c/o Student Life Office, Student Center, 5 South Street, Farmington ME 04928.

MISCON 4, May 6-7

Science fiction, fantasy, and gaming will be the subjects of this convention, to be held at the Holiday Inn, 200 South Pattee Street in Missoula, Mont. Room rates are \$32.50 per night for single occupancy; call (406)721-8550 to make reservations. Vonda McIntyre is author guest of honor; Dan Reeder is artist guest of honor; Glen (Scruffy) Hammer is fan guest of honor; and Ray Beauvais is gaming guest of honor. Events will include an art show, a masquerade party, original Japanimation, dances, SCA events, gaming, videos, writers' workshops, a computer room, an art gallery, a dealers' room, panels, and an auction. Membership rates are \$16 until April 15, and \$20 at the door; one-day memberships are \$12 at the door. Children under six years of age get in free with their parents; children 6-12 years of age get in for half price. Dealers' tables (6' X 2') may be purchased for \$40 (membership included). Write to: MISCON, Box 9363, Missoula MT 59807; or call (406) 549-1435.

AMERICAN GAMES FAIR, May 11-13

Communications, Conferences, and Exhibitions, Ltd. is the organizer of this event, which will take place at the Madison Square Garden Exhibition Rotunda. All categories of games are included in the scope of this show, including: board, trivia, card, magic, adult, party, VCR, sporting, video, juvenile, educational, action-and-skill, battery-operated, computer, and electronic games. To facilitate trade buying, the first day of the show is designated as a "trade-only day." Consumers will be allowed to attend the last days of this three-day event. A program of special events and entertainment will run throughout the duration of the show. Write to: Mary E. Gray, CCE Ltd., 122 East 42nd Street, Suite 1121, New York NY 10168; or call her at: (212) 867-5159, (212) 682-6232 (fax), or 425442 MEDIA (Telex).

NASHCON '89, May 12-14

Sponsored by HMGS-Midsouth and Games Extraordinaire, this miniatures-gaming convention will take place at the Music City Rowdway Inn in Nashville, Tenn. Special guests include Scott Bowden of Empire Games, Mark Blackmon of Empire Miniatures, Atley Turner of Frontier Miniatures, Richard Houston of Lyzard's Grin, RSM Ltd., Rudy Nelson (author of *Garde du Corps*), and Mark Campbell (author of *Close Action*). Historical-miniatures events will include Napoleonic, American Civil War, American Revolution and Colonial-era battles, as well as microarmor, Age of Sail, and ACW naval battles. Alternative gaming will include WARHAMMER* 40,000, WARHAMMER* FANTASY BATTLE, WARHAMMER* SIEGE, BATTLETECH*, and

STAR FLEET BATTLES* events. Other features include seminars, a dealers' room, a game auction, and a gamers' flea market. Registration is \$10 in advance and \$15 at the door. Hotel rates are \$42 a night; accommodations may be arranged through Games Extraordinaire. Write to: NASHCON '89, c/o Games Extraordinaire, 109 Donelson Pike, Nashville TN 37214; or call: (800) 777-GAME, toll-free.

BEACH TREK '89, May 19-21

This Star Trek convention will be held at the Holiday Inn Executive Center in Virginia Beach, Va. Guests include Walter Koenig, A. C. Crispin, and Bjo Thimble. Write to: BEACH TREK '89, c/o VISTA, PO. Box 62854, Virginia Beach VA 23462.

CON WEST, May 19-21

This gaming convention will be held at St. John's College in Santa Fe, N. Mex. Featured events will include AD&D®, BATTLETECH*, WARHAMMER*, ROLEMASTER*, STAR FLEET BATTLES*, RISK*, DIPLOMACY*, AIR SUPERIORITY*, UP FRONT*, AXIS AND ALLIES*, CIVILIZATION*, SQUAD LEADER*, SUPREMACY*, PARANOIA*, STAR TREK*, PANZER GRUPPE*, and other games. Preregistration is \$9. At-the-door fees are \$13 for two days and \$10 for one. Send an SASE to: Christian Eddleman, 1160 Camino De La Cruz Blanca, Santa Fe NM 87501; or call him at: (505) 984-8554. Gamers may also call Luke Warren at: (505) 984-2063. When writing, please list the games you wish to play.

CON*CEPTION '89, May 20-21

The New England Games and Comics Club is proud to announce its 1989 CON*CEPTION, to be held at the Multi-Purpose Center in Lewiston, Maine. Guests will include Steve Stern, Paul Pelletier, and Dan Cote from the internationally circulated Zen Comics. Events will include AD&D®, D&D®, TOP SECRET/S.I.®, and MARVEL SUPER HEROES® games, along with TWILIGHT: 2000*, VILLAINS AND VIGILANTES*, PLAY-DOH WARS*, and many other events. Contests will include art, miniatures-painting, costume, and trivia events; with cash prizes awarded in several. Other features will include an art and game auction, and a large dealers' room. Preregistration is \$5 for NEGACC members and \$7 for nonmembers; at-the-door fees are \$6 for NEGACC members and \$8 for nonmembers. Gaming sessions are \$3 each. For additional information, NEGACC memberships, club and dealers' tables, or preregistration information, write to: NEGACC, c/o Sheldon T. Hussiere, Star Route Box 160, Poland Spring ME 04274; or call: (207) 998-2682.

GAMEATHON '89, May 26-28

Join the Schenectady Wargamer's Association for its 10th-annual charity convention held at the Studio of Bridge and Games at 1639 Eastern Parkway in Schenectady, N.Y. Charity-rated RPGA™ Network tournaments will be offered, including a new three-round AD&D® game event. There will be miniatures, role-playing, and board games; a costume contest; a games auction; and a banquet. Basic registration for the weekend is \$20. Write to: The Schenectady Wargamer's Association, 1639 Eastern Parkway, Schenectady NY 12309; or call: (518)346-3773.

GAMESCAUCUS II, May 26-29

TriGaming Associates will hold this convention at the Concord Hilton located at 1970 Diamond Boulevard in Concord, Calif. Special guest of honor will be Dave Arneson. Featured events will include AD&D®, D&D®, BATTLETECH*,

CHAMPIONS*, TWILIGHT: 2000*, WARHAMMER* 40,000, TAC AIR*, SEVENTH FLEET*, AXIS AND ALLIES*, and TALISMAN* games. Also featured will be 15mm and 25mm Ancients, Renaissance, World War II, and Modern miniatures events, worldwide DIPLOMACY* games, and more. For hotel reservations, call: (415)827-2000. Be sure to mention TriGaming Associates or GAMESCAUCUS II to receive a special room rate. Registration for all three days is \$15 before May 1, or \$20 at the door. Single-day memberships are \$10 at the door. For convention registration or more information, write to: TriGaming Associates, PO. Box 4867, Walnut Creek CA 94596-0867.


INTERDIMENSIONS I, May 26-28

This first science-fiction and gaming convention will be held at the Omni Netherland Hotel in downtown Cincinnati, Ohio. Sponsored by Keepers of the Balance, the events include RPGA™ Network tournaments, a miniatures-painting contest, panels, an art show, a costume contest, a banquet, and more. Guests of honor include Tim Zahn, RPGA™ Network coordinator Jean Rabe, and artist Gary M. Williams. Registration is \$20 at the door. One-day rates will be available. Volunteers and judges are needed. Send an SASE to: INTERDIMENSIONS I, PO. Box 266, Batesville IN 47006-0266; or call: Robert Westerman any time after 7 P.M. EST at (812) 852-4542.

LITTLE WARS '89, May 26-28

LITTLE WARS, one of the premier wargaming conventions, will be held in the Bone Convention Center on the Illinois State University campus in Normal, Ill. All major miniatures lines will be represented, mostly by the manufacturers. There will be over 100 open games, plus a National Team Ancients Championship sponsored by NASAMW. We are also pleased to host the National Pike and Shot Championship. This convention will be hosted by HMGS-Midwest and its affiliate, the Central Illinois Tabletop Warriors. Admission is \$6 per day or \$8 for the weekend. HMGS members receive a \$2 discount off the admission price. Write to: LITTLE WARS, c/o Todd Fisher, 6010 North Marmora, Chicago IL 60646.

V-CON 17, May 26-28

V-CON, Vancouver's annual science-fiction convention, will be held at the University of British Columbia campus in Vancouver, B.C. The theme of this year's convention is "Humor and Satire in Science Fiction." Guests of honor include Spider Robinson, Robert Shekley, and Bob Shaw. Events will include panel discussions, an art show, videos, gaming, a writers' workshop, a costume bacchanal and dance, a dealers' room, and "guerrilla" theater. Membership for the weekend is \$18 Canadian (\$16 U.S.) until March 31, and \$24 Canadian (\$20 U.S.) at the door. One-day memberships will be available at the door at a cost of \$10 for Friday or Sunday, and \$15 for Saturday. Room rates at Totem Residence will be \$26 Canadian for a single and \$40 Canadian for a double. Write to: V-CON 17, PO. Box 48478, Bental Centre, Vancouver, B.C., CANADA, V7X 1A2. 

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MINIATURES

AVAILABLE SPRING

Editorial

Continued from page 3

away all the harder.)

The darkness fell away and there was the demon, not Demogorgon but it hardly mattered as it was one of those brutal 11-HD Type IVs. It grinned through its boar's tusks and traced a *symbol of fear* in the air as the paladin spurred his horse and charged the monster. The paladin made his saving throw and cut through the demon with his sword – easy enough to do as the demon was a projected image. The demon just laughed.

Enraged, the paladin began cursing the demon in language that most of us assumed paladins would scarcely admit to knowing, much less using, but the most telling insult was "coward." I figured that any demon worth his evilness would take offense at being called a coward by a mere mortal, so the projected image vanished – and the real demon appeared on the road, roaring out its own challenge. It began tracing another symbol in the air as the paladin charged again.

The paladin made his saving throw and struck at the demon –

and his sword bounced off the demon's hide, as the sword wasn't powerful enough to affect the monster. The paladin's player realized his character had only one weapon left that might do the trick. Wheeling his horse around and coming back for another charge, the paladin drew his *dagger +2*, then leaped off his horse and tackled the demon.

Had this been any other player, I would have pointed out the usual problems involved in leaping off a charging horse in plate mail to tackle a 10'-tall demon with a dagger, but the paladin's player had that look on his face that said he was really into it. He wanted that demon badly. He got it. Screaming and roaring, the paladin and the demon tore into each other, dagger against claws and teeth. The paladin slammed home every attack, but so did the demon. Worse yet, the demon began to levitate itself and the paladin over the road. Dice rolled, blood flew, hit points plummeted, and the other players began shouting, "Get 'im! Get that thing!"

The demon died at an altitude of

about 100'. Its levitation spell shut off. The paladin, still attacking, clung to the demon's body all the way down. When the rest of the party finally mustered the courage to ride back, they found the paladin – in the single digits of hit points, but alive.

"Got 'im," said the paladin, brushing himself off.

A legend came to life that evening, though we had not meant to create one. We had courage, heroism, danger, and excitement, all there in the rec room of an Army barracks far from home. Ten years later, the thrill and the glory of that paladin's triumph still live with me. It doesn't matter that the paladin wasn't even my character.

I like a lot of things about role-playing games – the friends, the laughter, the bad puns, the munchies – but creating a legend is the best part of all. It sure beats playing bridge.

Roger Moore

Why Are These Commies Running?



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FROM



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Letters

Continued from page 3

Dear Editor,

Your readers are interested in adventure, mystery, and romance. We at Mush Alaska offer a unique adventure that will be of interest to them: a trip to Mount McKinley via dog sled.

Yes, yes, a trip to Mount McKinley by dog sled would be a wonderful idea for many of our readers. We quite agree.

Dear Dragon:

I would think that many young people might not try to get things published, thinking that anything they write would be inferior to most DRAGON articles. I would like to point out something to these people. If you've seen many recent issues of DRAGON Magazine, you're bound to have noticed the name of Jeff Grub. What most people don't realize is that Mr. Grub is in ninth grade. I happen to know this because he rides my bus, which means that he is just one of us young folk. Yet he has had many articles published in DRAGON Magazine, he has written a TSR module, and he's even designed the MARVEL SUPER HEROES® game. Not to say that Jeff is necessarily your average teenager, but nonetheless.

Though the Jeff Grubb (two b's) who works at TSR long ago left the ninth grade, your letter gave us many hours of enjoyment. We thank you. Jeff liked your letter, too, despite us.

Dear Dragon:

I'm 14 and my brother has a very powerful assassin and he said he would whip the snot out of the most powerful demon. I want to know how I can defeat my brother's character. I'll give you some information about him. [Half page of character statistics follow.]

We suggest using the eraser on a #2 pencil. That should do the trick.

Dear Dragon:

Want me to send you a quick and easy system for picking up girls, using the 30-sided die?

Yes, but not for publication.

Support research.



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DRAGONMIRTH

April Fool's Special Edition

by Mark Heath

**WATER BED
DEPT.**



"I'm looking for a bed that's black and lagoonish."

by Joseph T. Pillsbury



by Walt Hacker

by Bob Muleady

by Bob Muleady

A black and white cartoon illustration by Bob Muleady. A large, scaly dragon with a crown is breathing fire into a stone fireplace. A knight in armor stands next to a woman in a medieval dress, who is holding a large knife. A small, round, horned creature is on the floor. The artist's signature 'Muleady' is on the right.

by Josh Jeffries

DON'T TAKE TOO LONG, JOE. THIS IS NATASHA'S DUNGEON WE'RE DELVING, NOT THE SUNDAY PICNIC.

MEN

DON'T WORRY, YAMARA, I'LL BE OUT IN A —

A cartoon illustration of a man in a suit and tie, looking distressed and sweating, standing in front of a door labeled 'MEN'. A speech bubble above him says 'AUGGGG'.



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IT WAS A TIME OF OGRES AND OF DRAGONS, OF MAGIC AND OF DEMONS... A TIME OF WITCHCRAFT, OF SORCERY, AND OF SEEMINGLY ENDLESS RUN-ON SENTENCES... BUT MOSTLY, IT WAS A TIME OF...

Bludgeons & Dragons

BY
JOHN LAKEY

© 1991 JOHN LAKEY

WITHIN THE VAST DIMLIT FOREST OF NORTHERN SCAPIA, THERE STOOD AN ANCIENT WIZARD TREE. FOR THE WIZARD CLEVER ENOUGH TO SOLVE IT'S PUZZLE, THE TREE OFFERED GREAT POWER. FOR THOSE NOT SO QUICK HOWEVER, THE TREE GRANTED COMEUPPANCE OF QUITE A DIFFERENT SORT.

STAND AND ANSWER
WIZARD TREE,
I CHALLENGE THEE
TO RIDDLE ME!

ERE COMES
ONE NOW

WOODEN WANT
TO BE IN HIS
SHOES

WOODEN I?

HAIR LIP!

MORONS

IDIOT!

SHUT UP!

"WHAT HATH MEAT, YET HATH
NO BONE?"

"UPON WHOSE HEART THE
SUN'S NOT SHONE!"




JOY, I KNOW
THIS ONE!
I HEARD IT
JUST THE
OTHER DAY
AT BRANSHIRE
PUB.




"STASHED IN
SQUIRRELLY'S
BURROWED
NEST"

"OR INSIDE TURKEY'S
STILL COOKED BREAST."



FAMILY TREASURES HELD SO
DEAR... STATE NOW YOUR
ANSWER...



LOUD AND CLEAR!


OR WAS
IT NIMWIRE'S
PUB?
NO, NO IT
WAS BRANSHIRE'S



BRANSHIRE'S!
NO, I MEAN...

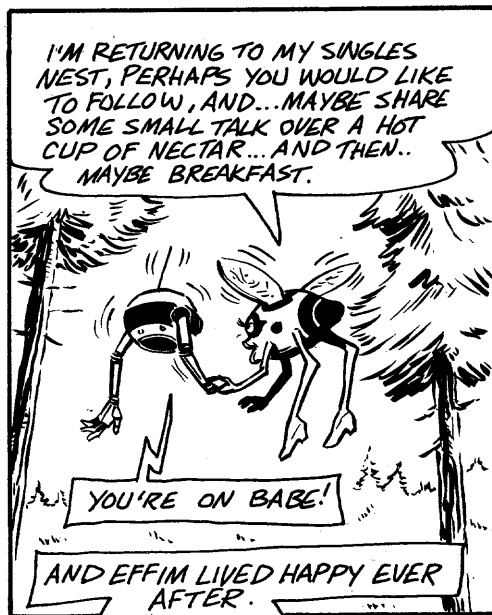
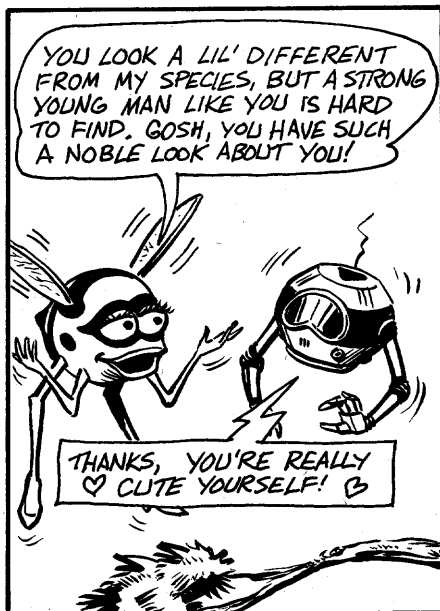
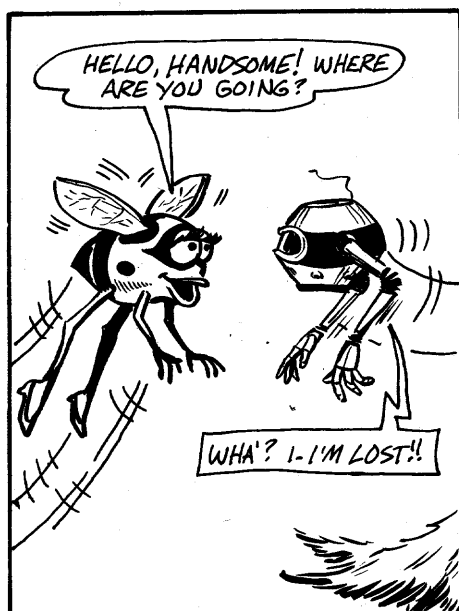
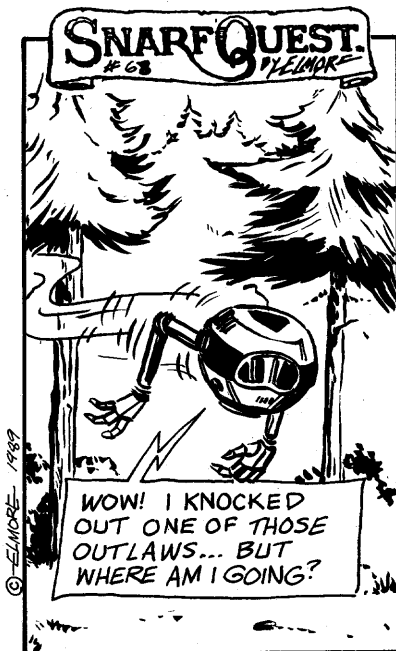
NUTS!

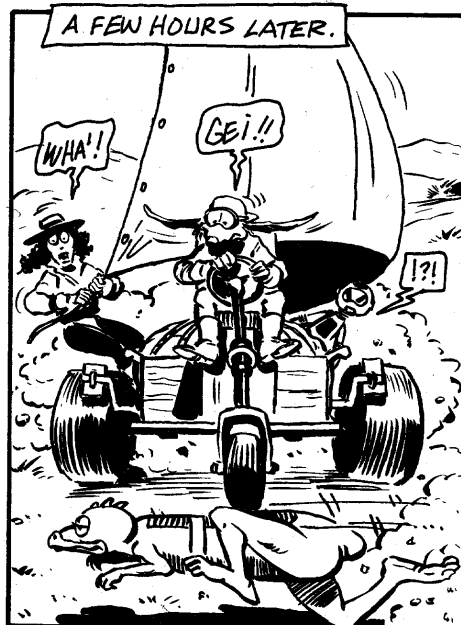
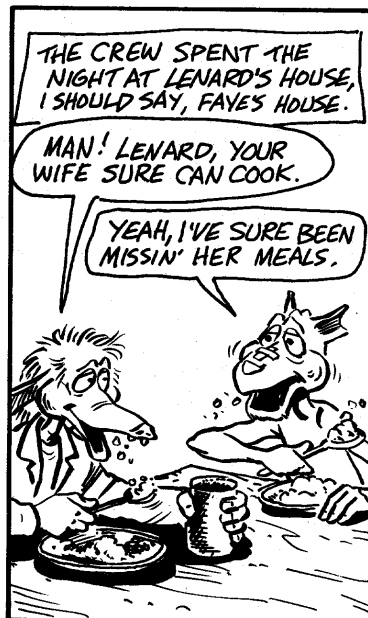
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POOF!



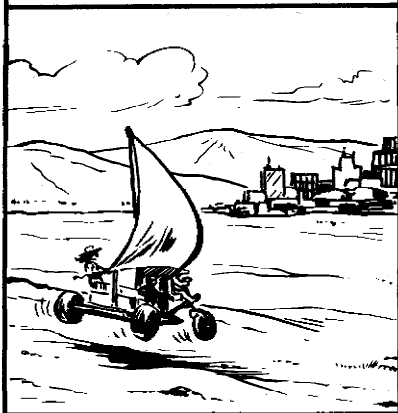
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LATE THAN
NEVER

END





THREE DAYS LATER, SNARF AND THE CREW MADE IT BACK TO THE CITY. THEY FILED THE GOLD CLAIM FOR THE BOYS BACK ON THE MOUNTAIN AND SENT COUSIN ZEK BACK TO HELP THEM.



WITH THE HELP OF B.B. AND GEELAH, THEY LOADED THEIR GOLD ON THE SHIP... AND SPLIT!



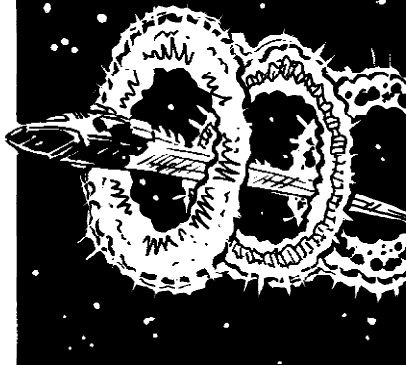
DURING THE NEXT FEW MONTHS, THEY STOPPED ON SEVERAL OUTLYING PLANETS. USING THE DISGUISE OF A ROCK 'N' ROLL BAND, THEY TRADED SOME OF THEIR GOLD FOR TONS OF MAN-MADE DIAMONDS AND PRECIOUS STONES. BECAUSE IN SNARF'S WORLD, NO ONE CAN TELL THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE REAL THING, MAN-MADE OR JUST PLAIN FAKES.



FINALLY THEY WERE READY TO GO THROUGH THE TIME JUMP, AND RETURN TO SNARF'S TIME AND WORLD.



FLAM



FEW MINUTES LATER...

WELL, THE SHIP IS ON AUTO PILOT. WITHIN A FEW DAYS WE WILL BE BACK AT YOUR VILLAGE. EVEN THOUGH WE HAVE BEEN GONE INTO THE FUTURE FOR A YEAR OR SO, I'VE RETURNED US TO YOUR HOME ONLY TWO WEEKS FROM THE TIME OF OUR DEPARTURE.



I HATE THAT TIME JUMPING BUSINESS, IT MAKE ME SICK!

DO YOU GUYS REALLY UNDERSTAND?

I GUESS... OOOOHH, I FEEL SICK!

N-NO... ER YES... N-NO?



WHAT WUZ DAT MIDDLE PART AGAIN?

NEXT ISSUE: HOME AT LAST.

THANKS AGAIN STEVE SULLIVAN FOR HELPING ME INK.

LAST FALL I WAS A GUEST AT DRAGONCON IN ATLANTA. I MET THREE GREAT GUYS FROM MEMPHIS, DAVID PORCH, MITCH FOUST, AND RICH HEROLD. JUST FOR FUN, I DREW THEM IN THE LAST FEW EPISODES OF SNARFQUEST. THEY WERE THE THREE PROSPECTORS SNARF RAN INTO IN THE MOUNTAINS. LAST WEEK, MITCH AND DAVID CALLED TO TELL ME THAT RICH HAD JUST DIED IN A CAR CRASH. I HADN'T KNOWN RICH FOR A LONG TIME, BUT I CAN DEFINITELY SAY THAT RICH WAS ONE GOOD MAN.

THIS PANEL IS DEDICATED TO RICH HEROLD, DIED 23 FEB. 1989, HE WAS 22 YEARS OLD.



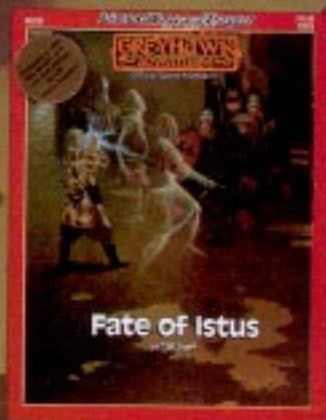


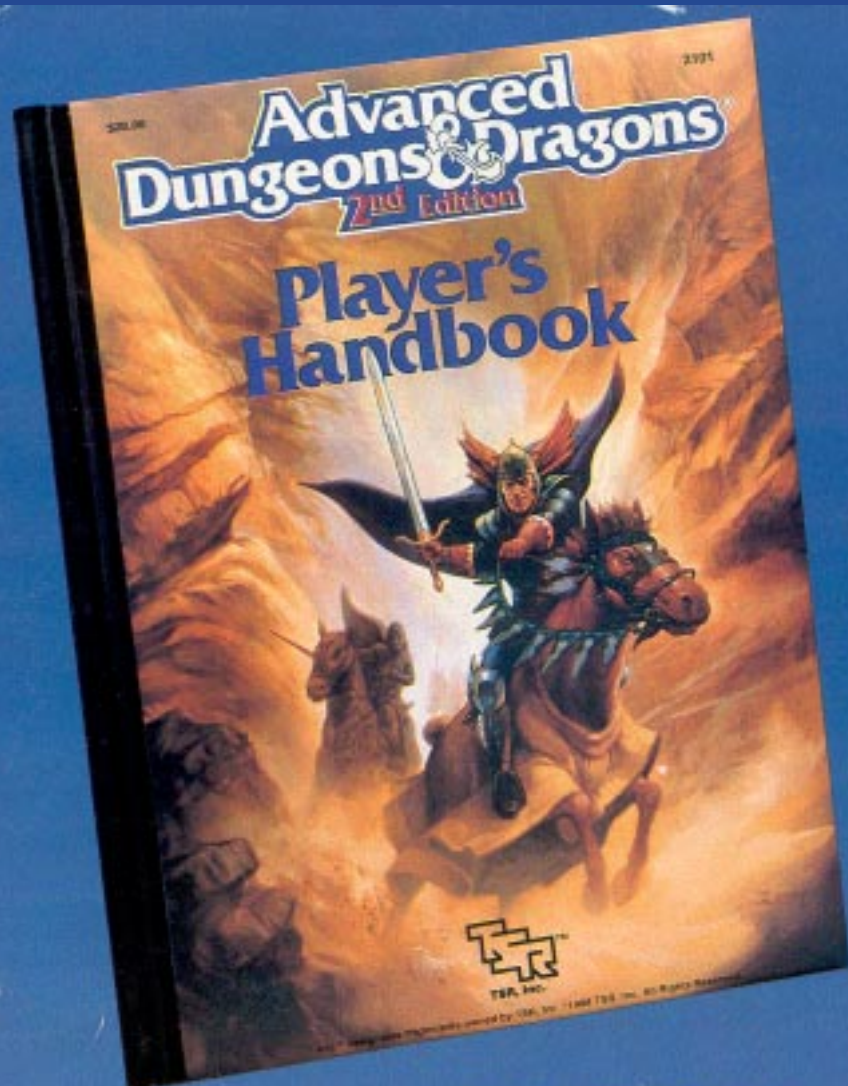
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